

THE
WORKS
OF
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C O N T E N T S.

S E R M O N CXXXVII.

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and the happy consequences of knowledge and industry.

Preached before the Society for promoting English Protestant Working-
Schools in Ireland, April 27. 1757.

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SERMON

S E R M O N CXXXVII.

THE PERNICIOUS EFFECTS TO A NATION OF IGNORANCE AND IDLENESS; AND THE HAPPY CONSEQUENCES OF KNOWLEDGE AND INDUSTRY.

Preached before the Society corresponding with the Incorporated Society in Dublin, for promoting English Protestant Working-Schools in Ireland, at their general meeting in the parish church of St Mary le Bow, on Wednesday, April 27. 1757.

PROV. ix. 6.

Forſake the fooliſh, and live; and go in the way of underſtanding.

THESE are the words of Wiſdom herſelf, ſpeaking in perſon: and to ſpeak them with effect to the poor of our neighbouring iſland, that *forſaking the follies* of their anceſtors, they may live as men ought; *and go in the way of underſtanding*, through the practice of the duties, and enjoyment of the comforts of this world, to the happineſs of the next, is the whole intent of the charity, which we are met to promote: the nobleſt and greateſt of the kind, that ever exiſted.

The kingdom of Ireland is bleſſed by Providence with all the means of proſperity: and yet the bulk of the people are in a condition very lamentable. With health and ſtrength, they have little or no induſtry; with capacities like other men, they have little or no knowledge, even of the common arts of life. With the beſt ſituation and opportunities for commerce, they have ſcarce any of the conveniencies which it imports: with a fertile ſoil, in a temperate climate, they have ſcarce food and raiment. Under a government, which lays on them the feweſt burthens, that perhaps ever nation felt, they are inceſſantly wiſhing for a change: and, which is the ſource of all, tho' the light of the reformation ſhines round them, and the door

of Christian freedom is open to them, they continue in thick darkness, voluntary slaves to absurd superstitions. Attached with servile awe to the lowest emissaries of the See of Rome, they imbibe even the dregs of its errors: which many, in other countries of the same communion, have the wisdom to reject. Hence their idolatry is grosser, their esteem of social duties less, their dependence on outward formalities more confident, their enmity to Protestants bitterer: and their abhorrence of labour almost insuperable, because it will benefit those whom they detest.

We ought to pity all the mistakes and sufferings of all our fellow-creatures, and yet more of our fellow-christians, how much soever they proceed from their own faults. Even their temporal evils ought to move us very sensibly: and though penury and nakedness may appear to unaccustomed eyes more grievous than they are; yet the real distresses flowing from them are often extremely heavy. But their spiritual disadvantages, that they have so little acquaintance with rational piety, universal benevolence, the value of moral self-government, and the genuine system of *the truth as it is in Jesus**, these intitle them to much tenderer compassion, though seldom considered in that view. For our fellow-subjects we ought to feel an additional concern, were their interests ever so separable from our own: but in the present case they are united most intimately. While these unhappy creatures remain without proper employment, the country in general must be unhealthy, as well as unpleasant, for want of culture; and thinly peopled, for want of necessaries: the sight of so much wretchedness must be painful; the relief of it expensive, and nevertheless unavailing. That part of the British dominions must be destitute of the wealth and strength, which diligence would quickly procure it: and instead of contributing to the support of the whole, must drain and exhaust England for its defence, whenever attacked.

This would be unavoidable, were the natives ever so amicably disposed towards us, ever so dutifully towards our sovereign. But being of a different and persecuting religion; taught by bigotted parents and instructors to regard us as heretics, abhorred of God; and devoted, by his vicergerent on earth, to present, as well as future, destruction: some of them will think doing mischief to us, when they can without hazard, a
laudable

* Eph. iv. 21.

laudable action; and others will imagine fraud, or perjury, or violence against such abominable miscreants, offences that claim an easy absolution. These sentiments must greatly affect their conduct in the ordinary intercourses of life: but unspeakably more, when the interests of their church come in question. Accordingly, for these, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, they were rebelling perpetually: in that of King Charles I. they massacred, unprovoked, as many compute, about one hundred thousand persons of our faith: in that of King James II. and the war that followed, not only the meaner sort, but the upper also, gave shocking proofs of the like inhuman spirit. By such repeated enormities, multitudes of them, on various occasions, forfeited their estates with their lives. These forfeitures, their descendants, whilst they cherish the same way of thinking, must consider as nullities; and wish and hope to regain what they have lost; pining with envy, thirsting for revenge; and imputing their poverty, the fruit originally of their treasons, and since of their idleness, and maintenance of priests without end, to our insupportable oppressions.

Thus uneasy at home, vast numbers of them go abroad, and chiefly into the territories of our enemies or rivals. There some of them exert themselves in trade to our detriment, which they would not do in their own land for our common benefit. Some again, who have got riches already, carry them away to enjoy them elsewhere. But far the greatest part of these emigrants take up the profession of arms in the service of popish powers; attack us with peculiar fierceness in the day of battle, as we have felt to our cost; and are always ready, when a critical juncture shall appear, to return and head their countrymen against us in another meritorious holy war; which we have the more cause to apprehend, as their bishops are nominated by the Pretender; as neither clergy nor laity amongst them have ever given, or offered to give, though pressed to it by some of their own church, any pledge of their fidelity to the present government; and as those regions of the island, which they occupy the most entirely, are the nearest to the continent*.

A 2

We

* We have been told indeed by a late Apologist for them*, that they have, for near 70 years past, that is, ever since they could not help themselves,

* The case of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, Dublin, 1755.

We must be allowed therefore to recollect what hath been ; and conclude from thence, what will, or may be ; to put ourselves, when it is requisite, in the condition of our forefathers ; adopt their feelings, to excite our vigilance, though not our resentment ;

selves, been perfectly well affected. But we can by no means trust, against all probability, and the experience of successive ages, to the bare word of a nameless author. And much less can we do it, when a contemporary author, an officer of his own nation and belief, living amongst our enemies, where he may speak out with safety and applause, treats our happy establishment as an usurpation ; and frankly declares, that the Irish Papists have a settled antipathy to Englishmen, with a strong attachment to France, and the House of Stuart *.

We have also been told by the same Apologist and others, that whatever the Court of Rome may have done, the Church of Rome hath never patronised persecution, or rebellion, or breach of oaths or promises, to introduce or support its doctrine or discipline. But if we must be in danger of these things, whenever the Court of Rome, or its partisans have power ; it is but a sorry consolation to tell us, that the Church of Rome hath no hand in them. And yet whence are we to learn the tenets of that Church ? Not surely from a few obscure, or at best private writers : but from the decrees of her councils, general and particular, the uniform determinations of her Popes, the edicts of her princes †, the received opinions of her divines ; the constant practice of her members, whenever an inviting opportunity presents itself ; and that practice not once condemned as unlawful, by any pretended authority amongst them ; though there have been many and loud calls upon them to condemn it, if indeed they disapprove it. But they have better ways than this ; they force the most notorious facts alledged against them, into a neutrality, if not into their service, by misrepresentations ; or, if any be intractably stubborn, they pass it over in total silence. Thus particularly this Apologist, though he relates a variety of historical occurrences, to show that his Catholic friends were innocent, or excusable in them all, no more mentions or hints at the horrid butchery of 1641, than if he had never heard of any such thing. And the Irish officer, poor man, hath forgotten it as entirely, in his narration of matters, relative to the Papists of that island : though he remembers a great deal more, than is true, of what preceded, and followed it. Treating persons in this manner, is really holding their understandings in too much contempt ; and being almost as void of judgment, as of honesty and shame.

* *Lettres d'un Officier Irlandois a un Officier Francois de ses Amis, Mem. de Trev. Aout. Sept. 1756.*

† See a discourse concerning the laws, ecclesiastical and civil, made against heretics. London, printed for John Wyatt, 1723.

resentment; and make supplemental provisions for security, where the former have proved insufficient.

How they came to be insufficient, needs not be minutely examined here. Ireland, remote from the rest of Europe, and harassed continually by domestic feuds, was in a state of great ignorance and rudeness at the reformation. God, *whose judgments are unsearchable**, raised up then in that country none of the *burning and shining lights*†, which he did elsewhere. Popery therefore, while the attention of England was engaged at home, kept its ground, and soon fortified it by foreign schools and connexions. The first rebellions indeed, which followed on this, principally weakened the authors of them: but the dreadful massacre almost extinguished the Protestants. And though the perpetrators of it suffered in their turns very severely: yet the survivors were buoyed up with hopes, in the two next reigns, of recovering all: which they were on the point of accomplishing, when the arrival of our deliverer King William, and their unsuccessful opposition to him, broke their strength, but not their obstinacy. However, since that time, the persons of figure have been gradually coming over: some on right motives; others in consequence of such regulations, as the Legislature can justly make in its own defence, and Papists can never consistently blame, though wrong minds may be tempted by them to hypocrisy. Still, proselytes on suspected inducements, and some of them only from the profession of a false religion to the profession of none, are not likely to have much influence, were they to endeavour it, on their inferiors: who accordingly have adhered to the Romish communion.

And were they never to quit it, their priests unquestionably, had they uprightness and prudence enough, might give them both better dispositions to industry, and juster notions of Christianity. But there is no prospect that they ever will, in any great measure: or should they do their best, the most refined popery is a dangerous corruption of the gospel; and hath besides a large mixture of things hurtful to civil society. But especially where a person of the same persuasion keeps up a claim to the Crown, its votaries will never be further good subjects, than as their seeming such may procure connivance

at

* Rom. xi. 33.

† John v. 35.

at their making converts, to which they confess themselves indispensibly bound: and should they ever make enow, there would be no peace afterwards, unless we and our king became what they would have us.

Therefore, till the generality of the Irish are brought to be protestants, the English are not safe. And doubtless they might have been brought to it, by gallies and inquisitions, long ago. *But we have not so learned Christ* *. Our adversaries can use every degree of force: yet protest, on occasion, indeed at the very time and place, if it be needful, that they use none; and inveigh against us for sanguinary laws, which they have extorted from us by disloyal practices, and which they know all their invectives cannot provoke us to execute. *But the weapons of our warfare are not carnal* †, but spiritual; instruction, conviction, exhortation. Now unhappily the persons, whose peculiar office it is to dispense these, are, in all Ireland, scarce eight hundred: a number vastly inferior, not only to that of the popish priests, but to the necessities even of the present protestants. Besides, of these few, a large proportion have no places of abode in or near their parishes. This alone would be a sad discouragement; but a still worse is, that where ignorance hath long obtained almost universal possession, and people are unused to reason, persuading them out of settled habits of religious belief and practice hath difficulties hardly surmountable; and yet less when the application is made to them by persons, whom they dislike; but least of all, when hearkening to it for a moment is prohibited under penalty of anathemas, at which they tremble. Attempts have been made; their language hath been learned on purpose; and none would or durst give the preacher a hearing. Possibly some clergymen may have been too much disheartened by such instances. Possibly others, God forgive them, may have been glad to excuse themselves from taking disagreeable pains. And the heads of our church have not an absolute power over their inferiors, to send them on what missions they please, as those of the church of Rome have. How far they have exerted the little, that is left them, I cannot say. But, before either bishops or parochial ministers are vehemently blamed, let the laity reflect, whether they also may not have

* Eph. iv. 20.

† 2 Cor. x. 4.

have been negligent in relation to many of these poor creatures, who live under their roofs; and try, what impression they can make on them. If they succeed, I hope it will beget emulation: if not, they will be readier to pardon want of success, or even despair, in others: and conclude, that no method will effectually teach them our religion, but education in it.

Were children taught nothing early, they would know nothing, and be fit for nothing, as long as they lived. But some principles of behaviour they will learn: and therefore should learn the best, which are those of true piety. Their instructors may direct them wrong in that respect, as well as in others: but still they must give them such advice for both worlds, as they think is beneficial; no less than such food, as they think is wholesome. And if one lesson be, what is constantly one of ours, *to prove every thing*, as they become able, *to hold fast that which is good, and abstain from all appearance of evil**: this is a potent corrective of whatever mistakes may chance to be infused into them. Without this corrective, nay, prohibiting it as poison, the Romanists employ the whole influence of education to the utmost: and therefore cannot reproach us, who employ it with such a restriction. Nor surely can the bitterest enemies to instilling of prejudices doubt, which sort are better. They may wish perhaps, that Children should have no faith, but a scorn of it: and they may bring up their own children thus, and take the consequences. But mankind in general must and will have a religion: and multitudes are turned or kept papists, by seeing, that so many pretended protestants have none. Or supposing the project feasible in itself, and otherwise unpunished by Providence: yet morals in private life, and order in public, cannot but decay and be lost, along with the fear of God.

Still, to educate children in our own persuasion, against the will of fathers or mothers, would be cruel, though legal; unless, by some overt act, they lose, or give up, their claim to educate them; whatever title the state may have to see, that they are bred loyal and useful subjects. And therefore our society takes none away by authority, but those of vagrant beggars,

* 1 Thess. v. 21, 22.

beggars. Yet our adversaries, I conceive, would few, if any of them, be so scrupulous as to make that distinction. And certainly not one of them would question; but young persons, committed to their care, might and ought to be instructed in their creed. Nor, I presume, would they inquire very strictly, what induced the parent to delegate to them his right. We induce him, neither by hard usage, nor menaces nor rewards, nor promises: but only propose to him the benefit of his child. And nature enjoins him to promote even its worldly benefit in every lawful manner. His priests indeed may tell him, this manner is unlawful. But that, and many other assertions of theirs, of which some appear at first sight very strange ones, are flatly contradicted by numbers of persons, as wise, as learned, seemingly as solicitous too about their own eternal happiness. He hath no solid grounds to prefer the opinion of the former to that of the latter. And therefore in this uncertainty, though he may resolve for himself not to change sides, break his old connexions, and make his old friends uneasy; yet why should he not intrust a son or a daughter with those, who will both provide better for their temporal interests, and qualify them to judge better about their religious ones, than he can?

Whatever their reasonings may be, the fact is, that popish parents are willing to send their children to the newly erected charter-schools; and more are likely to become willing. The reproach of it must wear off with the novelty; the stories of their bad treatment there have been disproved, as fast as they have been raised; and, I believe, the priests have often found it their wisdom not to overstretch their authority in this case, for fear of weakening it in all. But granting, that these houses cannot be always quite filled with the offspring of papists, which however make in all of them vastly the majority; yet the admission of orphans or vagrants, who else would fall into the hands of papists, hath the same good effect. And were now and then a few, whose parents are known protestants, to be received; no one, who approves either our common charity-schools, or that great charity-school, the foundling-hospital, could fail to be pleased even with this branch of the management; especially considering, how well the whole is conducted.

The particular rules cannot be specified here: but one there is, of great extent and importance; which would God were observed

observed in this nation; combining instruction with labour. The first part of instruction, to such as need it, is teaching them English; for till they understand that competently, their only inlet of knowledge is from the priests and their followers. They learn also somewhat of writing and arithmetic, which are of use in the lowest occupations; and more of reading; for the good books, which are put into their hands, when they go away, may contribute greatly to fix them in true religion. Of this, the plain doctrines and practical precepts are taught them, with necessary preservatives against popish errors; a proceeding no less prudent, than conscientious. For were they instructed in gainful arts, but the notions of their fathers left to grow up in them, it might cause in time a dangerous accession to the property of that interest. And were those notions to be rooted out, and no better planted; labour without religion, will generally, as soon as ever it enriches, if not before, give place to idleness, dissoluteness, and all sorts of crimes; whereas diligence from a principle of piety will go on, providing for descendants, for relations, for the poor; and teaching them all to provide, in their turns, for such as belong to them.

But the book-learning of these children takes up only two hours of their day; the rest they spend in work. And so much of the boys work, as can, is agriculture, for their nourishment and clothing; together with some rudiments of planting and gardening. Thus every school is a little farm; and helps to raise emulation in the most necessary of all business, of which the example and the skill is peculiarly wanting in Ireland. Besides this, both sexes learn those kinds of manufacture, especially the linen, for which there is like to be a demand; and such qualifications, as are requisite for common servants; protestant servants being, on many accounts, highly valuable. The earnings of the Scholars, by the things which they make or do for others, are, in most foundations, given to the master or mistress, as part of their salary; an admirable way of securing the children's industry.

If still it be imagined, that they might do more: inquiry and observation will gradually suggest every where the means to that end. But they are put out, as soon as their labour is worth having; for the design is not to get money for the schools by them; but to supply that nation with the quickest

succession possible of protestant workmen. If, notwithstanding, the expence of the charity be thought immoderate; it should be recollected, that the mere building and fitting up so many new fabrics, must be a heavy burthen, which will cease in time. And two or three have been more sumptuous, than needed; but at the charge of the persons, who desired it, not of the society; and care hath been taken of late to obviate all pretence for that complaint. Another consideration is, that the children must be removed to a distance from their parents, and their priests; else the latter, at least, would be perpetually tampering with them; and this precaution costs a great deal. They must also be entirely maintained; else they would not be sent. But the food and cloathing of each, over and above the produce of their labour, is only about fifty shillings a-year; surely a small charge for so excellent a purpose; besides that the whole money, laid out, circulates in the neighbourhood.

When their schooling is completed, they are all apprenticed; and, which shows in what esteem they are held, nothing hath been given with them for several years past. As many go out to husbandry, as persons will employ that way; more cannot. None, for some time, have been put to sea: partly because it seems better at present, that they should people their own country with well-disposed inhabitants, than be consumed in voyages: and partly also, because a false rumour, industriously propagated, of their being transported, for slaves, to remote regions, hath raised so wild a suspicion, that they, who are transplanted from one part of the island to another, must all be conveyed by land, to disprove it. They are placed only in Protestant families; and when they leave them, have a bounty of five pounds from the society, on their marrying Protestants; it being generally found, that when either party, especially the wife, is a Papist, the other is perverted by the help of the priest; or however, the children are educated in that persuasion. I wish the laity, men and women, of our communion, were equally assiduous, and equally assisted by their ministers.

It hath been affirmed, that, after all the care said to be taken, most of these children relapse. And at first many did, who yet must not only have been made usefuller in civil society by what they learnt, but, one should think, must also feel some
gratitude

gratitude for the improvements which they had received ; and dislike our religion the less, the more they knew of it. But however that might be, I am assured, on particular inquiry, that now, since the method of transplanting hath been followed, extremely few have become apostates. Indeed why should not habit alone operate as powerfully in our favour, as against us ? And why should not young people, thus grounded, see the reasonableness, and feel the amiableness of protestantism, especially when compared with gross Irish popery, so strongly, as to be more likely, when grown up, to bring over others, than be brought over by them ? Why, in particular, may not their affectionate remonstrances and behaviour, assisted by the tender workings of nature in their behalf, prevail, sooner or later, on their ignorant parents, to *forsake the foolish, and live, and go in the way of understanding ?*

Still it hath been said by some, that at best the progress of the design is too slow, to produce any material alteration. And we own, that for some time it was almost imperceptible. Several years must pass, before a single child could be sent from the schools ; and several more, before one could act for himself. Nay, since that, we have not advanced so fast, as might be wished ; no good design ever doth. Nor indeed is over great haste advisable. A new establishment cannot prudently be made any where, till proposals, reasonably advantageous, are offered ; and a committee fixed, of trusty and active persons, in the neighbourhood, to superintend it ; which, in the midst of Papists, where it is most needed, is hardest to be found. However, it is no inconsiderable thing, after all, in so short a space to have had one thousand five hundred children put apprentices, and above one thousand six hundred more now actually instructing. Were only the same number to be kept up, it would augment, without ceasing, the inclination of the balance to our side ; and at length the scale must turn. But every year hath brought an increase ; and, we may justly hope, will bring a greater. The good consequences of the undertaking will be more evident ; these very scholars will, many of them, become masters of families, and take servants from the schools ; become rich, and contribute to support, to enlarge, to multiply them. And they, who, by objecting that we make little speed, are one main cause of our

making less than we should otherwise, ought by liberal benefactions to compensate for past discouragements, and assist us in proceeding quicker.

No one surely will affect to disapprove, lest he should be obliged to subscribe. No one can be barbarous enough to desire the continuance of poor wretches in error and helplessness, that he may tyrannize over them with impunity. No one can bear so determined an ill-will, either to religion, as to favour the profession of theirs, because it is an absurd one; or to the clergy, as to oppose the forming of these children into rational creatures and good subjects, because they contrived and executed the plan for it; which ought to be deemed, on the contrary, great amends for any supposed former neglects. No wonder, if the project, before it took place, were treated by many as chimerical; but now, fact hath demonstrated both its practicableness and its utility. Proposals indeed may be offered for amending it in some parts; though the unexperienced ought to offer them with much diffidence; but really, for objections against the whole there is no room left. Both the scheme and the conduct of it have been more universally applauded by the Irish protestants in general, who must be judges of the improvement, to which they are eye-witnesses, than ever any thing of the kind was before in any country. Successive Lord Lieutenants have unanimously recommended it to our gracious Sovereign; who, with equal generosity and wisdom, prevented the imminent ruin of it in its infancy, eighteen years ago; and hath upheld it ever since, by an annual donation of a thousand pounds, and occasional ones amounting to sixteen thousand more. The Parliament of Ireland also, in concurrence with the King, have settled on it the produce of a new tax; valuable in itself, and doubly so as a testimonial of the sentiments of the Legislature. Nay, the very papists have acknowledged the efficacy of our schools, by setting up others of their own in competition with them. And so far as they may do any good, we are glad to be the occasion of it; but we must counteract the hurt, which they may do, by a redoubled zeal for what they are aiming to defeat.

Indeed this charity is a public concern of both nations, not only in a religious, but a political view. It relieves present distresses, which always endanger the quiet of a state, more or less;

less ; and prevents those of generations to come. In proportion as it spreads, the country will be more civilized, more cultivated, more populous, more wealthy. These children will stay at home ; and not run abroad to settle in popish lands, which hitherto the fameness of belief hath made so agreeable to the inhabitants of that country. By their industry, and the good fruits of it, they will stir up emulation in all of their own rank. By their conviction of the truth of protestantism, they will be satisfied, that the forfeitures of their predecessors, in the two last centuries, for their many rebellions in support of the opposite cause, were deserved. They will be thoroughly disunited from those, whom they have renounced ; will love their masters for being of the same faith with them ; and stand up for the defence of it, on trying occasions, in word and deed. But further, even the Papists of Ireland will have reason given them, by these schools, to think well of their protestant neighbours, and of the clergy in particular. Their priests have suffered them to languish for ages in ignorance, hunger, and nakedness ; we bestow on them knowledge and plenty. To them they owe the guilt of their insurrections and massacres, the misery of their attainders and confiscation : to us they will owe the blessing of being humanized and enriched.

Now of all these advantages, Britain must partake. The wealth of that people will not only, in loyal hands, render them a strong barrier to us, but will circulate continually from the extremes to the heart of the empire. Along with that, we shall gain a still more desirable treasure, their good opinion. They will plainly perceive, that we neither hate nor despise them ; that if we find it needful to restrain their industry in some things, we excite, aid and direct it in others ; and zealously encourage what evidently conduces to their present, and, we are persuaded, to their future happiness also. Then, as our undertaking succeeds, we shall have those, if wanted, for protestant soldiers in our own troops, who else would be popish ones in the service of our foreign adversaries ; and we shall no longer be over-run, as we are, in this metropolis, in its suburbs, in our Eastern and our Western settlements, with Irish Catholics, as they call themselves, to an amount, which few of us imagine ; and at which all of us, if we knew it, would be justly alarmed. Our religion is losing ground on the
conti-

continent; we have so much more need to be compact, and of one mind, at home. It is losing ground even amongst ourselves; and God give those attention to the danger, who ought to guard us against it. But such care no way interferes with an attempt of making reprisals; and carrying the war, by means of these schools, into our enemies head-quarters. If we conquer them there, we shall have much less cause to be afraid of them here. The supply will be cut off: on the residue of the party like methods will produce like effects. And when once they are produced, the inhabitants of the British isles and colonies will all have the same friends and foes: our fellow-subjects, whose eye is now evil against us, will not only *for their brethren and companions sakes wish us prosperity, but because of the house of the Lord our God will seek to do us good* *. Our civil and ecclesiastical community will, in comparison with their present state, *look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners* †.

What then remains, but that so worthy a design be vigorously executed; that we contribute to it, according to our ability; and move others to contribute, according to our influence? The protestants of Ireland are doubtless most immediately concerned to exert themselves. And yet the printed accounts from thence intimate, what else we should be cautious of saying, that all persons there have not been so bountiful as they should. For some years, the main support was from England. And since that, of the Irish subscriptions, those of the bishops make towards one third; and, together with those of the clergy, near one half. Yet the utility is general; and the laity have a much more durable interest in their estates, than the clergy have in theirs; and a larger interest, even in most church estates, than church-men themselves. It is not strange however, if they judged, that these ought to stand foremost in the work; if they saw more difficulties on the spot, than we here could discern at a distance; and were held back, somewhat too long, by doubts of success. Besides, though the stated subscriptions of that country are smaller, than might be expected; they far exceed ours: their presents and legacies have risen to no inconsiderable sum; and many, instead of money, have given lands. The original formation

* Psal cxxii. 8, 9.

† Cant. vi. 10.

mation of the scheme too is altogether owing to the Irish: on them also hath lain the ~~care~~ and labour of carrying it into execution; superintending every school, and conducting the whole machine, from the beginning to this day; without which, ever so great liberalities from us would have been thrown away, and ~~sunk~~ entirely.

Therefore, whilst we remind them, that, both in conscience and honour, they should take on themselves a due share of what primarily belongs to them; let us remember how much they have taken; and though we should think it not enough; let us rather try to win upon our brethren by gentle representations, and engaging examples of beneficence, than reproach any of them unkindly; and yet resemble them in that deficiency, for which we blame them. Their esteem and affection is well worth purchasing at a much dearer rate; for we purchase consequentially strength and quiet to ourselves. We were once in the same state of blindness and bondage, that the poor wretches of that island are: let us express our gratitude to God for freeing us from it, by endeavouring to free them. We have been known to them chiefly hitherto by our victories and just severities; let us now show them our compassionate bounty; and thus acquaint them with the true genius of protestantism. We have been commonly traduced amongst them, as destitute of religion; let us take this amiable method of confuting the imputation. We are wealthy; they are indigent; let us prove our wealth to them in the most reputable, the most useful manner. We send much of it continually to nations unrelated, ill affected to us, for things which do us no good, but harm: let us strike off a few articles yearly from our vanity and luxury; employ the savings to advance genuine piety, loyalty and industry, in our sister island; and so benefit ourselves and her at once. We of the clergy ought *in all things to show ourselves patterns of good works**; and surely then for the service of religion, of the protestant religion, of a people so nearly allied to us. Amongst our laity also, *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required*†, on all fitting occasions. And there ought to be in every man, though possessed only of moderate fortunes, *a willing mind according to that he hath*‡. But however excusable many such may be; they

* Tit. ii. 7.

† Luke xii. 41.

‡ 2 Cor. viii. 12.

they who are sprung from Ireland, certainly ought to distinguish themselves in forwarding this charity; their relation demands it of them. They, who have estates there, or incomes of any sort arising from thence, should be liberal to it, beyond others, who have no such connexions. For it is natural to be generous peculiarly in the place, from which their capacity of being generous proceeds. And the more their circumstances and stations point out to them to reside in that place; if they do not, the more ample amends they should make it some other way; besides that what is expended there to encourage labour and liberty, will ere long greatly increase the produce, the rent, the value of each person's lands.

These considerations are laid before you, solely for your cool reflexion in retirement. No advantage will be taken of any sudden impression, which they may possibly make now; or of the willingness to give, or shame to refuse, that might accompany the social meal, which is to follow our present assembly. This is treating you with singular delicacy and respect. Certainly it will not fail of moving you to the proper return, of such voluntary deliberate donations, yearly or occasional, as best evidence a free heart. Where they will be received, is publicly advertised.

But then, whilst we join with our friends of that kingdom in what we can both do, we must rely on them absolutely for what inspectors alone can do. Much praise, we are sensible, they have merited on that account, from the highest to the lowest. We can only exhort them, and we know they will *suffer the word of exhortation, to abound more and more**: to re-examine frequently the plan, and see what may be corrected or improved in it; the management, and see what may insensibly have gone wrong, or been relaxed: to hear objections attentively and candidly, both from approvers and disapprovers of the scheme; for among the latter may be persons of consequence and of value, though under the dominion of prejudices: to rectify or vindicate things, as the case requires; and *not let their good be evil spoken of*†. The choice of masters and mistresses for the schools is a most essential article of their trust. These ought never to be taken from motives
of

* Heb. xiii. 22. 1 Thess. iv. 1.

† Rom. xiv. 16.

of self-interest, importunity, compassion, cheapness; or any other, than a well-grounded persuasion, that they are qualified, by their serious and practical faith in the protestant religion, their skill and diligence, their spirit and temper, to teach the children, committed to them, their duty to God and the king, together with the means of getting an honest livelihood. For neither of these, without the other, will suffice. But as keeping them to work may be more for the private emolument of the master or mistress, than principling them well; and a failure in the former is more easily perceived; there must be a closer watchfulness over the latter. Yet they are not to be taught an uncharitable vehemence against papists, like theirs against us; much less an imagination, that such bitterness is religion enough; but a fervent affection for the doctrines and precepts of primitive Christianity, with a conscientious dread of *making either of none effect through the commandments and traditions of men* *. At the same time, whatever indulgence, whatever appearance, may exalt them, either in reality, or but in fancy, beyond their due rank, is to be prohibited most peremptorily. If knowledge of accounts, or even of writing, will tempt them to think they are above the meanest business; they had much better have little or none of it imparted to them. And in all respects they should be brought up so, as will induce them to look upon their subsequent apprenticeship in the light of a preferment.

For preserving the institution in this vigour, it will be extremely material to keep a frequent correspondence, entering into particulars, with the local committee of every school; to compare the management of one with another, diffuse the notice of whatever good œconomy hath been any where introduced; and recommend it to all, who can properly make trial of it. Once a prudent and experienced person was sent to visit a considerable part of these foundations; to examine their state, and propose diminutions of expences, improvements of their lands, useful regulations of various kinds †. Possibly a repetition of this practice, at moderate intervals, with a report to the committee at Dublin of what had appeared on the enquiry, might have more good consequences, than can be at present distinctly foreseen.

VOL. IV.

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In

* Mark vii. 7. 13. Col. ii. 8.

† In 1746.

In putting the children out, it is of the utmost moment, that the persons, who take them, be not only nominal protestants, but real Christians. For indeed they had better turn papists again, than become such profligates, as the examples and common talk, it may be feared, of some families would make them. They had better think wrong in several articles of religion, than scorn the whole; and be ready to do mischief in particular points occasionally, than in all constantly. But one would contrive most studiously to secure them from both; and for that purpose, if possible, not to place them with popish fellow-servants; at least without a mixture of others. And if those who are intrusted with them, would but have the goodness to bestow some peculiar attention on their moral and religious conduct, it might often prevent the loss of all that had been done before; and both they, and the rest of their house, as well as the poor children, would be the better for it.

The priests, we are told, pursue them to the remotest corners of the island, in hopes of recovering them. Surely then we should be as anxious to retain them. But above all, the ministers of their parishes ought to eye them without intermission; inculcate upon them the most earnest cautions not to discredit their education; and engage them in the firmest promises, whenever they are attacked, either in point of doctrines or duties, to apply for help from them immediately. Our adversaries obtain and perpetuate their influence over their people, by having much intercourse with them, by letting themselves down to them. *They are wise in their generation* *. If we hope to be a match for them, we must imitate them. And then, as they act thus, partly for their own private ends, and we can do it only out of kindness, we shall so far have the advantage. Not for this reason only, but for many more, ministers ought to reside in their parishes, and *sow spiritual things where they reap carnal* †. The Legislature ought first to make provision for residence in a sufficient number of places, then to require it. And mere personal abode, with a legal performance of stated offices, ought by no means to be regarded as the substance of parochial duty. It is not a formal and indolent, much less a gay and voluptuous, but a self-denying, condescending, pains-taking clergy, that will do good; who
are

* Luke xvi. 8.

† 1 Cor. ix. 11.

are *instant in season and out of season**: who *knowing the terrors of the Lord, persuade men*† to avoid them; who loving his promises, invite men to partake of them. Now, if the laity would have such pastors as these, they must prefer and recommend such, discountenancing others. And if they would have the labours of these effectual, they must permit them to have a due effect upon themselves. Else our religion will be reproached and blasphemed for their sakes; which, would they observe its rules, we might hope to see honoured and embraced. For it is remarkable, that in those counties of Ireland, where protestants are strictest, papists are fewest.

But then, if whilst we in England say these things to our neighbours over the water, we set them a pattern of doing the contrary; if our laity are profane, if our clergy are supine; we shall exhort them with an ill grace and small success. Therefore let us begin to amend, and there will be some prospect of their following. Or, if they begin, let us think it more honour to copy them in what is right, than to lead them in what is wrong. And God grant we may both *consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works; and so much the more, as we see the day approaching*‡: too probably the day of national calamity, unless we avert it by a speedy reformation; but certainly the day of death, and that awful *account*, which every one shall give of himself to God ||.

* 2 Tim. iv. 2. † 2 Cor. v. 11. ‡ Heb. x. 4, 25. || Rom. xiv. 14.

S E R M O N CXXXVIII.

PERSECUTION A DECISIVE EVIDENCE OF AN UNCHRISTIAN
SPIRIT.

Preached in the Parish Church of St Mary, Lambeth,
November 5. 1758.

JOHN xvi. 2, 3.

*They shall put you out of the synagogues : yea, the time cometh, that
whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service.*

*And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known
the Father, nor me.*

THE various evils of human life are, all of them, just matter of serious and melancholy consideration ; but each in its due proportion and degree. Such of them, as flow of necessity from that order of things, which providence established in consequence of man's original transgression, are undoubtedly very heavy and afflicting : labour, pain, sickness, death ; whether befalling us, or our friends. But a great alleviation of them is, that God inflicts them on us, not man ; and uses them to serve excellent purposes, of teaching us resignation to himself, and compassion to each other ; of weaning us from this world, and exciting in our hearts earnest desires of a better. So that these calamities, being a wholesome, though rough, exercise of our virtue and piety, may be considered, in this view, with comfort enough. But such as proceed from our own mutual injuries, though even these *work together for good to them that love God* *, are a ground for much deeper concern ; for here is guilt, as well as suffering : Mankind not only multiplying present torments, very needlessly, one to another, but treasuring up future and eternal ones to themselves ;

* Rom. viii. 28.

selves; defeating, as far as creatures are able, the gracious designs of the Creator of all; and turning his world into the very contrary of what he intended it should be.

Well might one have hoped, that our natural principles of humanity, at least of religion, would have so far restrained us, that evils of this kind, if they existed at all, should not be frequent, or extreme. But early and general experience hath too fully confuted such imaginations. However, when revelation came in to the aid of reason, giving so much clearer notice of our duty, and stronger motives to it; one should firmly have expected, that the voice of God, speaking expressly from heaven, must have produced a general and a lasting reformation. But, instead of this, a new gloom arises from hence, to make our view still more discouraging. We see revealed religion, as well as natural, professedly scorned by many, and seriously regarded by very few. Yet, though it hath but little influence, were all that influence good, there would still be some joy. But to have the very *light, which is in us, become darkness**; and what was calculated, beyond all things, to make us good and happy, perverted to make us wicked and miserable, this completes the sorrow.

Yet so it is: *The gold itself is become dim; the most fine gold is changed*†. The piety of the patriarchal ages degenerated very early into pernicious idolatries, full of rites impure and barbarous. And no sooner almost were the Jews reformed effectually from the worship of false gods, than their zeal for the true one became so by degrees, so blind and fierce, that the condition of many of them might seem not to be extremely altered for the better. Towards the heathen, and one another, indeed, their bitterness might usually defend itself by the plea of antecedent provocation; but their treatment of Christianity, when it appeared, was void of all excuse. That perfectly benevolent doctrine, recommended to them by every instance of unmixed goodness attending its delivery, if it had not charms enough to attract their love, had surely nothing to excite their hatred. Yet such was the turn of this perverse nation, that even their own Messiah, *the hope of Israel*‡, contradicting their favourite scheme, of devoutly indulging their lusts, and piously tyrannizing over the rest of the world; they crucified

* Matth. vi. 23.

† Lam. iv. 1.

‡ Acts xxviii. 20.

crucified him, and pursued his followers, with that inhuman bigotry, which, in the words of the text, he foretold they would.

Nor did this wicked spirit actuate them alone: but the heathens also, who had borne, for the most part, very patiently, with the infinite variety of one another's gods; who had long borne with the Jewish religion, as opposite to all their own as could be; yet persecuted the Christians with a most barbarous rage, for three hundred years; till at length, triumphing over cruelty with mere patience and innocence, it gradually became the established belief of the Roman empire.

And then, at least, would a compassionate spectator of the course of this world, tired out with the sins and miseries of it, have surely thought, the time must be come now, to *lift up his head**, and rejoice in the happy change. For who could possibly imagine, that the professors of so merciful a religion, especially after experiencing so long the evil of persecution themselves, would ever be brought to exercise it on their own brethren. *But how then should the scriptures be fulfilled, thus it must be* †? The wisdom of God foresaw and foretold, what could not but seem to the first disciples very incredible in itself, that, by quick degrees, their successors would bring into the Christian church almost all the corruptions, which they had heard their master condemn in the Jewish: human additions to the law of God; human traditions, that *made it of no effect* ‡; dishonest zeal to gain profelytes; implacable resentment against all who differed from them.

Too soon, and too wide, did these offences spread among the professed followers of Christ: and would God any part of them were quite innocent, that ever had the power of being guilty. But unspeakably the deepest root did this evil take in the See of Rome: which began surprizingly early to verify of itself one part of our Saviour's words, by *putting out of the synagogue*, excommunicating, or at least attempting to excommunicate, without cause, the churches of Asia, in the controversy of Easter; and employed afterwards, at some times the dignity of the imperial seat, at others the reverence of a principal apostolic foundation, to obtain continually fresh ac-
cessions

* Luke xxi. 28. † Matth. xxvi. 54. ‡ Matth. xv. 6. Mark vii. 13.

cessions of power; till at length a bishop of that See, in the seventh century *, assumed the title, which his almost immediate predecessor † had declared to be a mark of antichrist; that of the universal pastor of Christ's church. And his successors took effectual care, that it should be fed with such doctrines most diligently, as were most subservient to their wicked designs. All, who opposed any of their novelties, but especially any new claim of authority, they prosecuted with infinitely greater vehemence, than if guilty of the grossest immoralities: and not only subjected them to the utmost rigour of spiritual censures, but to the heaviest temporal penalties that they could; and at length to death itself.

Even over princes, in process of time, was this unwarrantable dominion extended: and having often been exercised in fact, was in the last place openly asserted, as a just right. For the fourth council of Lateran, held in the year 1215, and pretended to be a general, and therefore infallible one, after beginning with a Creed, of which transubstantiation, then first established, made a part; proceeds, in the third canon, to decree, "that all the deniers of that, or any other of the [pretended] Catholic doctrines, be excommunicated by the secular arm: that all, who are suspected, unless they clear themselves within a year, be deemed heretics; and that all civil powers, of what rank soever, be admonished, and, if need require, compelled by ecclesiastical censures, to swear, that they will extirpate all heretics out of their territories; and if any of them refuses it, that he also be excommunicated; and if he give not satisfaction within a year, the Pope shall declare his subjects to be free from their oath of fidelity, and give his dominions to catholics; who, driving heresy out of them, may possess them without contradiction, and preserve them in the purity of the faith." These are the words of that canon. Nay further still; the same council gives to all, who, taking upon them the badge of the cross, shall fight against heretics, the same spiritual privileges and indulgences, as if they fought against infidels. For making war on the latter, merely for the sake of religion, though a most unchristian employment, they had already, for selfish ends, taught to be meritorious. And having now raised fighting

* Boniface the Third.

† Gregory the First.

ing against the former to the same degree of merit, they soon effected the destruction, not only of the Albigenes, a very blameable sect, but of the poor Waldenses likewise, much better believers than themselves; thus fulfilling the second part of Christ's prediction, *Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think, that he doth God service.*

After these beginnings, the instances, that followed, of Popish usurpation, treachery, and cruelty, in every nation in Europe, every nation upon earth, in which popery hath got footing, have been so numerous, that the time would fail me even to name them: and therefore I shall confine myself to a general mention of such as have happened in a country, which, God be thanked, hath felt much less of them, than many others; I mean our own. And this I shall do without bitterness, far from exaggerating any one fact, or dwelling with the least pleasure on things so dishonourable to the Christian profession; and much too mournful to be remembered, if it were safe to forget them.

No sooner * had King Henry the Eighth been declared, what he undoubtedly was, the supreme head of the clergy, as well as laity, in his own kingdom; but though he had meddled with no one point of the Romish doctrine besides; nay, was so far from being a protestant, that all his life long he burnt others for being so; yet Pope Paul the Third pronounced him, by a bull, to have forfeited his crown, required all his subjects to revolt from him; and all Christian kings to make war upon him. And in fact this produced some dangerous insurrections, both in his reign, and that of his son Edward the sixth; under whom no papist was put to death on account of religion, excepting such as rebelled on account of it. How destructive to protestants the short reign of his sister, Queen Mary, was, notwithstanding their raising her to the throne, and notwithstanding her solemn promises to them, we all know. Yet, in the first ten years of her successor, Queen Elizabeth, not one papist, not one of the persecutors, suffered; but all enjoyed quietly the private exercise of their own worship. Indeed almost all of them conformed publicly to the establish-
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* The following facts are chiefly taken from Foulis's history of Romish Treasons, fol. 1673, a discourse concerning the original of the Powder Plot, 4to, 1674, and a book intitled, *The Gunpowder Treason*, republished, with a preface, by Bishop Barlow, 8vo, 1679.

ed church; till, in her eleventh year, Pope Pius the Fifth forbade it; and finding his secret designs ineffectual, commanded, by a bull, the whole nation to rebel against her; and denounced a curse against all, that should obey her; which order of his a daring traitor published in the city of London; and receiving for it the reward, which he deserved, is the first martyr, of whom the Romanists have to boast in her reign; for a real martyr they account him. And the famous Thuanus, a French historian of their own communion, having called this man's deed a rash action; even so gentle a censure was ordered by the court of Rome to be struck out of his book.

Immediately after this, they began to separate from the church, and rebel against the state: and though very unsuccessful, yet held themselves bound by the Pope's anathema to rebel on; till his successor, Gregory the Thirteenth, pitying the dangers, to which they had exposed themselves, for ten years together, gave them at length a permission in form to be quiet; provided it were no longer, than till the above-mentioned bull could be openly executed. In the mean while, another method was taken, of private attempts to murder the Queen. Many such there were; and almost all of them encouraged by the confessors of the wretches, who engaged in them: particularly by those of that new invented order, which hath profanely distinguished, by the name of the meek and holy JESUS, the most bloody and faithless combination of men, whom the sun ever beheld; among whose fundamental constitutions it is, that whatever their superior commands, they shall always think lawful; and renouncing blindly their own judgment, receive the word, that comes out of his mouth, as that of Christ himself. This is that society, which one of themselves, Father Campian, in a letter to Queen Elizabeth's council, declares, have entered into a covenant, to destroy, by all methods they can, all heretic princes; in which, he says, they will persist, so long as one of them remains in being. And this man also, being executed here for treason, is reputed by his brethren a martyr.

No wonder, if in such a state of things, at length severe laws were made. None such had been made in the first twelve years of the Queen's reign: nor was it capital for priests to be in England, till the twenty-seventh: when the better sort,

even of themselves, acknowledged the treasons of the rest to have deserved it. After this, fresh attempts followed; the Spanish invasion, and the Irish rebellion, both excited and blessed by the Pope: besides endeavours to raise insurrections here; in which Garnet, the superior of the English Jesuits, was deeply concerned: to whom, as himself owned, orders were sent by the Pope, forbidding all Catholics to admit any person for King, on the Queen's death, however near in blood, unless he would swear to promote their cause to the utmost of his power. But failing of success, he procured a pardon from King James for all his past treasons, and then immediately proceeded to commit new ones.

For in the first year of that monarch's reign was the execrable design of this day formed, though accidents deferred its execution. He, in the mean time, permitted no severity against papists, excepting two priests who suffered for a treasonable plot; spoke favourably of them to his Parliament, honoured several of them with access to his person, with knight-hood; with regards, that made some of his protestant subjects jealous. Yet did not all this hinder the conspirators from pursuing steadily the most shocking design, that ever entered into the heart of man. A small scruple indeed some of them had; that a few of their own communion must have died with the rest. But this was soon removed by their confessors; and the holy sacrament made the bond of so horrid an impiety. Measures were concerted for an insurrection at home, for an invasion from abroad to support it: Prayers offered up, both here and at Rome, for the success of their enterprize; which a good providence discovered, but a few hours before it was to have been executed. Then they broke out into a desperate attempt of an open rebellion, in which some of them perished; some, that were taken, gloried in their design to the last; others indeed condemned themselves; and a great part of their communion condemn them now, as is the usual fate of unsuccessful treasons. Yet Garnet, who was executed for it, and owned himself privy to it, passes amongst them for a saint and martyr. Tesmond, another Jesuit concerned in it, escaping to Rome, was made Penitentiary to the Pope; who himself, as one of the same order affirms, was acquainted with the design, and had proper bulls ready to issue on the success of it.

After

After this discovery, alarming as it was, the most moderate counsels were taken; and an oath formed, to distinguish the better sort of them from the rest; in which they were only to engage, that notwithstanding any bull or dispensation from the Pope, they would bear true faith and allegiance to the King. Many amongst them took this; but immediately what they had done was condemned at Rome: Blackwell, their Arch-priest here, was deprived of his dignity, for being one of them; and all catholics were commanded absolutely to suffer death, if need were, rather than take the oath.

In the reign of King Charles the First, the same prohibition was repeated: and the Irish massacre of so many thousand protestants, in cold blood, gave a new proof of popish treachery and inhumanity. With a very ill grace did they pretend, after this, to distinguish themselves for good subjects in the two next reigns: when to pass over the popish plot in the former, the conduct of the latter too fully showed, at what point all this boasted loyalty was aimed. They had perverted that unhappy prince, King James the Second, to an enthusiastic zeal for their faith, and of consequence for restoring it here. In vain did he take the most solemn oaths to maintain our religion and liberties. He could not prevail on himself to put on the appearance of keeping them, even for a few years: but invaded the whole constitution with such hasty steps to its ruin, that our fathers beheld popery rushing instantly upon them, armed with all the terrors of arbitrary power; and, besides the ancient instances of its barbarity, they had a dreadful fresh one just before their eyes, in the miserable banishment of their brethren, the French protestants, contrary to all faith, to all pity. But, just when every thing, which they feared, was beginning to fall on them in Ireland; then it pleased God to endear to us a second time this day, by the landing of our great deliverer; who succeeded to the throne, left vacant; and from whom is derived to us, we hope, a perpetual security in our present happy establishment.

Moved by this recital of the dreadful evils, which religious intolerance hath committed and attempted; some perhaps may accuse religion itself, as hurtful to society. And undoubtedly false notions of it may be detrimental, and sometimes even pernicious. But so many false notions of parental affection,

conjugal tenderness, gratitude, every motive to action. Yet this was never thought an argument against the principles themselves. And if any thing be fitted to do good and no harm on earth, true religion certainly is. Natural religion is universally acknowledged to be mild and humane. Christianity indeed some have done their utmost to pervert. But let either the bitterest zealot, or the most bigotted infidel, show, if they can, one instance, in which the gospel gives the least pretence for pious cruelty. Every where it breathes mildness, patience, forbearance: enjoins Christians, of ever so different opinions, to receive one another in mutual charity: and even, of those who are no Christians, it permits us not to judge hardly; much less to use them unmercifully. If then some, who profess this faith, will act in defiance to it, let them bear their condemnation. But to charge their guilt on Christianity, would be like censuring the legal constitution of any government, because they, who rebel against it, behave unjustifiably. For indeed the spirit of persecution is rebellion against Christ, under pretence of a commission from him: it is *the Man of Sin, sitting as God in the temple of God**; And where it is not designed impiety, it is the grossest ignorance, both of the attributes of our Maker, and the precepts of our Redeemer, as the words of the text expressly declare: *These things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.* And the remedy for this evil is, not casting off the regard, which we owe to God, but establishing just and worthy notions of his service in the minds of men: which, in proportion as they prevail, will banish enthusiasm and superstition from off the earth: whereas, if true religion be once lost, every absurd opinion, as well as mischievous practice, may spring up in its stead. If atheism could take place, it must visibly be the ruin of society. But it cannot. There is an irresistible bent in the human mind to reverence an invisible power: and if men are not directed to do it in a right manner, they will do it in a wrong. Therefore the certain consequence of abandoning true piety, is becoming a prey to false. And accordingly the emissaries of the Church of Rome have never been either more active, or more successful, than since the astonishing increase of profaneness, and indifference to religion,

* 1 Thess. ii. 3, 4.

ligion, amongst us, have given them so unguarded an opening for the re-establishing their ancient dominion.

Still how unjust soever it may be to think hardly of Christianity on their account, yet at least these corrupters of it, perhaps we may think, cannot well be abhorred too much, or treated too severely. But God forbid, that we should imitate, however provoked, what we condemn; or charge on every particular papist, what we cannot but charge on popery in general. Many of them doubtless are well-meaning persons, from whom both the principles, and the practices above mentioned, are concealed, as much as ever they can, by artful disguises, or bold denials; and who think in their consciences, that nothing should induce them to commit the crimes, of which their forefathers have been accused. Yet notwithstanding, were that authority, in which they profess an implicit faith, to command their assistance in ever so wicked an enterprize, at a critical juncture; on what grounds the most unwilling of them all could refuse, one doth not see. In the mean while indeed they may be much better persons, than their religion, did they know the depths of it, would allow them to be. And even amongst the worst of them, great numbers may be entitled to our Saviour's plea for his crucifiers: *Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do* *. But such ignorant zeal, though it alleviates their guilt, increases the danger from them: and they must allow communities of a different faith, to defend themselves against that Danger most watchfully.

Ours hath done it by penal statutes, terrible in appearance, but extorted by the necessity of the times; and so entirely suspended, as that necessity lessened, that they, who have every where broke through all laws, divine and human, to destroy the protestant religion, without sparing it in a single instance, where they could suppress it with safety, have long enjoyed unmolested the exercise of their own, notwithstanding so many legal provisions to the contrary, notwithstanding their numerous attempts against former government, notwithstanding their general refusal to own and give security to the present. God forbid, that we should envy them this indulgence; God grant, they may learn to imitate our mildness!

* Luke xxiii. 34.

ness ! Of that indeed there is little hope. Yet still let us continue to act, as Christians ought ; and add to the public lenity of our superiors, every prudent instance of kind behaviour in private life ; never indeed affecting or entering into dangerous intimacies with them, but never giving needless provocation, even to the worst ; much less grieving the better-minded, by upbraiding remembrances of past things. Let us in every other respect absolutely forget all, that they have done or attempted ; only not forget due thankfulness to God, that they have not succeeded hitherto ; and due precaution that they may not succeed hereafter ; either by open force, or such private arts of increasing the number of their proselytes, as may enable them to use force when they will. For the spirit of that church, though studiously concealed, is still the same. Not one of the vilest actions, done to serve it, have they ever by public authority condemned, liberal as they are of condemnations in other cases ; not one of the most extravagant claims, made in favour of it, have they ever disowned. And they cannot disown with common modesty, though they force themselves to do it sometimes, that they hold all promises and oaths to be void, which they make to the prejudice of their religion or church : for it is the express language of their infallible guides, their Popes and their councils. It is very true, their practices of late have not been so enormous, as formerly : the temper of mankind is milder ; their influences on the princes of the earth is less ; and they have the wisdom not to threaten, while they cannot strike. But remember, our days have known the bloody executions of Thorn, and the merciless banishments of Saltzburg ; the inquisition of Spain subsists in its full force ; the imprisonments, the confiscations, the enslaving, the murdering of our protestant brethren in France, have been revived within these few years with the bitterest fury, though entirely unprovoked. And if we will trust those, who continue to show, by such marks, what they are ; our folly will deserve every thing, which we can suffer.

Now what have we to secure us from all the errors, and all the cruelties, of this most corrupt and tyrannical church ? Not one thing, under God, but the support of the government, which we now enjoy ; and have seen attacked by a formidable

midable rebellion, in favour of a bigotted member of that communion. How then shall we support, and strengthen effectually, an establishment, so essential to our happiness? By hearty and active loyalty, honest and disinterested public spirit, firm and friendly union; but above all, by serious repentance, and amendment of our ways, with fervent prayers to the great disposer of all things for his protection. And may it please him to deliver us, in time to come, as, blessed be his name, he hath in time past; not for our righteousness, but for his own mercies sake; to *break the power of the ungodly and malicious**; abolish persecution, tyranny and injustice, amongst men; and graciously hasten the promised time, when *the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid: when none shall hurt or destroy in all his holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the Sea*†.

* Psal. x. 17.

† Isa. xi. 6, 9.

S E R M O N CXXXIX.

THE DUTY OF SUBJECTION TO THE PUBLIC MAGISTRATE; AND
THE SIN OF SPEAKING RASHLY OF THE POWERS THAT ARE.

Preached in the Parish Church of St Mary, Lambeth,
October 25. 1761.

TIT. iii. 1, 2.

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates; to be ready to every good work:

To speak evil of no man; to be no brawlers, but gentle; showing all meekness unto all men.

THIS is the first anniversary of the day, on which we lost, very unexpectedly, a sovereign, under whose just and mild and prudent administration we had lived, in freedom, safety and plenty, above thirty-three years. The mercy of Providence, unworthy as we are of it, hath filled his place with a most pious and gracious, amiable and respectable prince; who hath hitherto given us cause to hope, from his government, for every thing that we can wish. Our joint thanksgivings have just now, with the greatest reason, been offered up to God for so important a blessing; together with our earnest prayers, which indeed we repeat as often as we assemble here, for his long life and prosperity. But the most acceptable expression of our gratitude will be, to perform, every one of us, diligently the several duties of loyal subjects, that belong to our respective stations. And these the passage of scripture, which I have read to you, comprehends so fully, and ranges them in so natural an order, that explaining and enforcing the precepts of it, as they lie there, will give a sufficient view of all that is incumbent on us in this manner.

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates. These phrases have the same meaning: only the variety of them serves to set forth the obligation the more completely, and press it the more earnestly: as indeed there are few, that deserve a greater regard.

Human kind, from early ages, have lived collected into large numbers: and our nature and circumstances plainly require, that we should. We experience an inward propension to assemble and unite: and are by the faculty of speech peculiarly qualified for it. We have many affections, and the seeds of many virtues, planted in us; which a more solitary life would give us very little room to exercise or cultivate: and many wants and necessities belong to our condition, which nothing can tolerably well supply, but an extensive intercourse of man with man. We cannot therefore either improve or enjoy ourselves, as God designed, but in society: and society cannot subsist, without a due subordination of one part of it to another; that is, without government and obedience. The appetites, the passions, the caprices of men, would be always leading them to disquiet their neighbours, if they were not restrained by authority. And a public direction is further necessary, both for defence against external dangers, and for establishing inward order in the community. For even the best meant endeavours of each particular for the general benefit, would be almost always ineffectual, and often prejudicial, unless they were conducted by the general wisdom. Then besides, the civil power is eminently useful, by the sanctions of its laws, to what concerns us yet more nearly, the reformation of our morals, and bettering our tempers. For though rewards and punishments have no immediate efficacy to make a change within: yet regulating our behaviour will of course by degrees contribute to mend our hearts. Human laws indeed cannot extend to all our actions: but to many of the most material they can: putting it out of men's power to do the evil, which else they would, or stopping them short before they are gone far: *saving some by fear**, making others wise by experience, extirpating the incorrigible; and obliging every one to set all around him a pattern of innocent and regular living. But then lastly, as a right belief in God, and his va-

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* Jude, verse 23.

rious dispensations towards men, promotes, beyond all things, both the virtue and the happiness of mankind; another chief advantage of good government is, that whereas without it, most men would either through ignorance be destitute of religious principles, or by their own folly, or the fraud of others, led into absurd and pernicious ones; it kindly makes provision for them of a rational method of instruction and worship; not obtruding it on them by force, but proposing and recommending it, which will always suffice; and thus they are guarded, at once, from the dreadful evils both of impiety and superstition; and carefully taught to discharge the duties, and bear the afflictions, of human life.

Government therefore being so powerfully conducive to the attainment of these most valuable ends, which doubtless our Maker designed to be attained, the establishment of it in the world ought consequently to be regarded, as a most important law of God and nature, directly flowing from the constitution of things. And what reason teaches, revelation expressly confirms; declaring, that the civil power is *the ordinance of God*; and they, who exercise it, *his ministers of good to men**: from which premises the Apostle's conclusion in the same place is undeniable; *wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake*†. Whoever then refuses due submission to the authority, which Providence hath placed him peaceably under; though we ought to judge of him as charitably as with reason we can, if he pleads conscience for it; is, at least undesignedly, guilty of disobeying the appointment of Heaven, in a matter of the utmost consequence to the good of mankind. I do not, by this, enjoin obedience to whatever power may start up, and maintain itself, in times of public confusion, for a while, by the sword; but to such only, as is fully and quietly settled, and acknowledged by the general consent of the community. Our duty becomes such, in this case, only for the sake of our common good. And therefore, not they who think they ought, and say they would protect us, but they who can and do, are to be owned and obeyed. The nature of the thing, and the frequent vicissitudes of human affairs, requires absolutely, that this be the rule; and all the world have ever admitted it, excepting a handful of

* Rom. xiii. 1, 2, 4.

† Rom. xiii. 5.

of persons in our own age and country; who undoubtedly deserve both pity and esteem, so far as they go upon principle; but whose notions, were they to spread, would produce inextricable confusion throughout the earth.

And very happily scripture is as clear in this point, as reason. *There is no power, saith St Paul, but of God: the powers that be, the several governments actually subsisting in each nation, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinances of God**. Again, St Peter directs all Christians to *submit themselves to every ordinance of man, every human establishment, for the Lord's sake: for so is the will of God†*. And accordingly they did so from the beginning of the gospel; and amidst as many usurpations and bad titles, in the Roman empire, as the history of any nation hath ever recorded, followed no other maxim, than that of obeying faithfully the authority, to which the Wisdom of Heaven, superintending all things, from time to time subjected them. But when persons have owned a government, not only by receiving and claiming the benefits of it, but by taking solemn oaths to it, and joining in public prayers for its preservation: one or both of which I presume we have all done, these additional ties render disloyalty afterwards, gross perfidy and abandoned profligateness.

We cannot then reasonably doubt, to whom our submission is due; and we can seldom, if ever, doubt, at least in any point that will affect our practice, how far it is to be carried. If our superiors command us to do any thing, which we cannot lawfully, *we ought to obey God rather than men‡*. But otherwise we are to act as they require us; and if they treat us hardly, or manage the concerns of the nation wrongly, we are to bear it with patience. For consider; the affairs of government are always numerous and difficult; sometimes uncommonly intangled and perplexed. They, who manage them, are liable to the same mistakes, subject to the same passions, and exposed to more temptations, than other men. Therefore not only miscarriages and ill accidents will happen; but neglects and failures, partialities and grievances, must be expected in the behaviour of public persons, as well as private. And whoever will not sit down contented under some things of this

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* Rom. xiii. 1, 2.

† 1 Pet. ii. 13, 15.

‡ Acts v. 29.

fort, resolves in effect never to be contented at all, and demands a perfection from others, to which he cannot pretend himself. But then further, as there will be always something amiss in political conduct, so there will always, either through ill design or ignorance or inconsiderateness, be fault found with actions that deserve it not; or the blame laid where it should not. And though mismanagements ought certainly to be rectified, when they can by lawful and prudent methods; and they who attempt this are intitled both to candid interpretation, and in cases of moment, to assistance, from others: yet they should examine themselves very strictly, and all who are concerned should examine with care, not only whether they design well, but whether they consider impartially, and judge rightly; whether they use allowable means to attain their imagined good ends; and whether, on the whole, they are not more likely to do harm, than service.

But supposing opposition made with all these precautions, which it seldom is; and yet made ineffectually; if the point be of any great consequence, without question it is very unhappy. Yet still, having recourse to violent measures would bring on so many obvious mischiefs, and for the most part such multitudes of unforeseen ones too, with so much uncertainty of making things better, and so dreadful a chance of making them one way or another worse, that every wise as well as good man, if the case be in any degree tolerable, will much rather chuse, to wait for a remedy from the providence of God, than think of applying desperate ones of his own.

There is indeed a possibility, which, but for a peculiar case which was our own, it would scarce be proper to mention, that government may be so entirely perverted from its original design, by some who share in it; such exorbitant powers usurped, and so destructive an use made of them, that the duty of obedience must give way to that of self-preservation. But this can be only when the necessity is extreme; and the evil insupportable; the danger of it imminent, and by every other way unavoidable; the relief confessedly real, and visibly within reach. Such were the circumstances of our fathers at the Revolution. But persons are not to imagine, that such frequently happen; or that any thing like them happens, as often as they fancy, or even feel, a few inconveniencies;

conveniences; but to bear them, were they many and heavy, with a virtuous patience and sacred regard to the public tranquillity. For certainly the government of the cruel and vicious emperor Nero was extremely bad, when St Paul, notwithstanding, enjoined so strongly dutiful obedience to it, as you may read in the thirteenth chapter of his epistle to the Romans. How religiously then, and how cheerfully, ought we to obey those, who have the rule over us; since undeniably the truth is, and long experience ought to extinguish all suspicion to the contrary, that they have not the least design of hurting us in any one respect, but a sincere desire of securing and promoting all our interests, domestic and foreign; that almost all the inconveniences, which we have suffered, and the burdens, that we undergo, have arisen from the wickedness or folly of the nations round us, or from our own; that our established religion is purer, our liberty greater, our property safer, than that of any other people upon earth; that whatever in our condition may want to be rectified and improved, we may do it by peaceful methods, whenever we agree upon it; that we have no one good effect to promise ourselves from disloyal attempts; but a sure prospect, were they to succeed, of every evil of every kind, to ourselves and our posterity.

In the second part of the text, the apostle proceeds from obedience, the primary duty of subjects, as such, to the other, and consequential parts of their behaviour under government. And here his first rule is a very comprehensive one, that they *be ready to every good work*: in general, to fulfil all the obligations of life; in particular, those of their own station. An universal regard to religion and piety, justice and benevolence, sobriety and temperance, is the very groundwork of social happiness. It gives courage and spirit, health and plenty; trust and union at home, respect and honour abroad; it keeps prosperity from being dangerous, and fills adversity with comfort and hope. But then, besides the common ties, which bind all men, the apostle includes in this precept, what he could not so well mention singly, the particular ties of each man, belonging to his respective situation and employment. It requires therefore, that persons in authority be faithful to their trust, watchful and diligent, upright and disinterested; or to speak in the language of scripture, *Men of truth, fearing God,*

God, *hating covetousness* * : that persons of quality and fortune acknowledge their subjection to the same laws, human and divine, with their inferiors ; and be careful to use the advantageous ground, upon which they stand, chiefly to pour down benefits, and shed abroad good influences, on all beneath them ; and lastly, that those, who are of lower estate be content with their condition, yet industrious by honest means to better it ; pay respect to their superiors in word and deed, proportionably to their degree, and *render to all their dues ; fear, to whom fear is due, honour, to whom honour* †. Thus, by a regular subordination and mutual serviceableness, every one will concur to make the weight of government easy to those, who sustain it ; and the benefits great to all, that are placed under it. And the blessing of Heaven will not fail to crown the virtuous endeavours of such a people with success.

But though every good work is beneficial to society, and every sinful one detrimental : yet some sins are more directly pernicious, than others : and require a more especial caution to be given against them. Such are the two, which usually go together, calumny and faction. These therefore the apostle prohibits especially, in the following part of the text : *To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers.*

The original word, in the former of these rules, being that, from which the name of blasphemy is derived, commonly denotes in scripture, using reproachful language of those, who are peculiarly intitled to respect and reverence ; as, in the first place, the great God ; and, in a lower sense, persons who bear his authority on earth. Considering therefore, to what point the passage before us relates, we must apprehend this injunction to be directed principally against the wickedness of such, as St Peter saith, *are not afraid*, or, translating literally, *do not tremble, to speak evil of dignities* † : where again the word is, *to blaspheme*. Here then St Paul must be understood to command, that we neither allow ourselves, nor encourage others, in disrespectful and injurious expressions concerning our rulers, whether supreme or subordinate ; but preserve in our minds, and those of all men, so far as we can, that honour and regard for them, which is the strongest bond of government, of peace and order. In charity it must be supposed, that few of the

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* Exod. xviii. 21.

† Rom. xiii. 7.

‡ 2 Pet. ii. 10.

many, who violate this precept, do it with ill design. But at best, for persons to entertain and spread notions to the disadvantage of their superiors, which, in the case of an equal to whom they wished well, they would immediately see were groundless, and, it may be, absurd, is a very criminal thoughtlessness; and often produces most unhappy effects. Therefore, when we hear such things said, we should always reflect, how many there are, whom prepossession, or interest, or resentment, may induce to report untruths or uncertainties; how many others do the same thing from mere wantonness of invention, or desire to appear knowing; and indeed, how easily facts, or material circumstances, are, without intention, misrepresented or misunderstood. We should call to mind, whether we have not, perhaps more than once before now, been led into a firm belief of many a story, for which we have afterwards been convinced there was never the least foundation; and learn from thence a prudent distrust for the future. Nay further still, before we pass our judgment so freely on the characters of public persons, and the administration of public affairs, we should spend a little time in judging ourselves; and considering well, not only whether we are so impartial and candid as we ought, but whether we have indeed a sufficient capacity, and sufficient information, to determine at all about such matters. Unless we can be sure of this, about which multitudes, we find, are daily mistaken; we should be very fearful of venturing beyond our depth; or, in scripture language, *exercising ourselves in great matters, which are too high for us**, and ought in many cases to go but little further, than our good wishes and prayers; leaving the rest to those that are intrusted with it, and *studying to be quiet, and do our own business*†.

But reproachful discourse, though our superiors be spared in it, is fully mischievous enough, to deserve being included, as doubtless the apostle designed it should, in his general prohibition of evil-speaking. Private quarrels, arising from this source, have often produced very fatal public dissensions. And were it never to have that ill effect, it would still have many others of the worst kind. The good opinion of those, amongst whom we live, is by nature, and with great reason, extremely dear to us: and robbing us of it is taking from us
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* Psal. cxxxi. 2.

† 1 Theff. iv. 11.

one of the chief things, that make life agreeable. Every one feels this in his own case. No injury occasions bitterer uneasiness, or keener resentments; yet none is more frequently done: not only in anger, which however, were it the best grounded in the world, is by no means an excuse for saying just what one will; but in perfect good humour, heedlessly and gaily, and for mere want of something else to say. An offence, committed with so little scruple, is usually retaliated with just as little. And thus the cruellest and most barbarous imputations, sometimes obliquely hinted at, others directly spoken out, make up a great part of the entertainment of conversation. They, who pretend to condemn them, hearken to them, and repeat them notwithstanding: and almost every body goes on, more or less, contributing their share to what they complain of, all the while, most heavily. Now though all the ill things, that we tell of others, were true; yet both Christian charity, and common humanity, would forbid the needless publication of them. And one should think private interest too might incline us to set the example of such forbearance: as we ourselves either have, or may have, occasion for gentle treatment in return, and a friendly veil to be drawn over our failings. But if a report of this kind be false; then the raising it, and in proportion the carrying it on, is doing a most heinous injury to an innocent person; which may spread we know not how far, and last we know not how long, and do him we know not what harm; without our being able, were we willing afterwards, to restore to him, at all completely, the good name that we have taken from him: which yet we must heartily endeavour to do, whatever shame we may bring upon ourselves by it, before we can hope for our Maker's forgiveness.

The second prohibition of the apostle is levelled against the vehement spirit of party and faction: *To be no brawlers*, not contentious. Doubtless there may be differences of opinion and conduct, about national concerns, of such importance, that every one ought to interest himself in them, and even zealously. But then it should be done upon reasonable grounds; and without passion or bitterness. We should imagine nothing to be of greater moment, than it really is. We should neither speak nor think worse of the opposite side, than we find, on a cool inquiry, they deserve: we should judge of no man's character,

rafter, by the hurtful consequences, either of his notions or his behaviour; if there be any reason to think, that he doth not see them: we should on no account violate the laws of truth, justice and humanity, to distress the most obstinate adversary; or to gain the most favourite and material point. In matters of more indifference, the contest, if there is any, should in all reason be carried on with less warmth; and every one be freely allowed to follow his own way of thinking, and promote the interest of his own friends, without offence. To this equitable temper we should first form our own minds, and then study to introduce it amongst others: making it our business to diminish the subject, and narrow the bounds, of contention; and each labouring to abate the vehemence of his own side, with whom he may hope to have credit. But how small soever his success may be in that, each may at least watch over himself; be on his guard against over-great credulity; resist the temptation of countenancing serviceable falsehoods; avoid, as much as possible, whatever may seem an unkind action, and most resolutely abstain from doing an unjust one. For whatever is dishonourable and base, ill-natured or uncharitable, in our opposers, is so in us; neither our passions, nor our interests, nor the common practice of the world, is the proper rule of our behaviour, or will justify it another day before the holy Judge of the whole earth. All these things are extremely plain; every body owns them; yet few or none regard them. Bad persons have their ends to serve by transgressing bounds; very good persons are enticed, or provoked, to go on insensibly much further than they should; and each side is so full of indignation at the faults of the other, that they overlook their own entirely. The consequence of this is, that almost every body applying what is said against the iniquities of party, not at all to reform themselves, but solely to load their adversaries with imputations, they grow worse by what is intended to make them better; whereas we should learn from the failings of others, whom we are but too like, to examine, whether we are not guilty of some of the same; and readily grant mutual forgiveness to those common errors, which we have all great need to be forgiven by our Maker. Thus we should soon quiet and subdue this evil spirit; which in private life makes men disagreeable and injurious, intemperate and riotous, idle and negligent of their pro-

per business; and whilst it fills their minds with other distinctions, often unmeaning, yet always mischievous; destroys from off the the earth, in proportion as it prevails, the most important and necessary of all distinctions, that between good persons and bad. For amongst the zealots on every side, the lowest and the vilest creature, that is useful to their cause, or even but noisy for it, shall meet with high favour; and the worthiest who opposes them, be it ever so great a trifle, or for ever so strong reasons, shall not only be slighted, but ill treated and abhorred. Then for public affairs: the effect of this unhappy temper on them is, if possible, still worse. The end of society and government is to unite men in promoting their general interest; and the aim of party is to disunite them entirely. The whole study of each faction is to advance their own separate strength, overlooking the public welfare; to prevent the other from doing any thing beneficial or popular, to deceive or force them into measures absurd and pernicious; then to accuse them for the omissions or mistakes, nay the unavoidable inconveniencies, of which the accusers themselves have been the cause. Thus they labour unweariedly the ruin of one another; and too frequently, rather than fail of it, will risque, or even contrive, the ruin of the whole. For this wicked vehemence increases in men by unexpected and astonishing degrees; and the wisest, when they once give way to it, cannot foresee how far it may carry them, amidst such a number of things to provoke, or entice, or entangle them so, that they may come to do at length, what they least thought of, nay, what they most abominated. But though party quarrels produce every where very hurtful consequences; yet, as they have room for rising to the greatest heights, so they are capable of doing the greatest harm, in countries of civil and religious freedom; the happiness of which, though on all other accounts invaluable, is grievously subject to this one alloy; that the bold and active spirit, which naturally accompanies liberty, hurries men on, in various instances, to wild behaviour; and particularly carries public disputes to most immoral and dangerous lengths. Here therefore St Paul's advice* is of the utmost importance. God be thanked, that we have followed it much better of late, than formerly: and
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* Gal. v. 14, 15, 16.

God grant, that we never relapse into wrong behaviour on this head again. *Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

This rule of being mutually serviceable by love, is the same, in effect, with that which the last words of the text prescribe; that we should be gentle, *showing all meekness unto all men.* Our passions frequently prompt us, not only to do the contrary, but even to defend it. And yet one should think it might be easily seen, that a proneness to resent and disoblige, take things amiss, and do things for others to take amiss, whatever ill-natured pleasure there may be in it just at the time, is neither a happy, nor a virtuous disposition; much less one allowed by the gospel towards *our brethren, for whom Christ died**: but that indulging it must gradually sour our tempers, hurt our healths, at least destroy our comfort: besides the ample return for it, that we shall be too likely to meet with from the world; and the dreadful guilt, that we incur by it in the sight of God. So that whatever difference of interests there may be in other respects, yet in one point the interest of all men is clearly the same: that gentleness and meekness be exercised, good-nature and obliging behaviour studiously cultivated. This is not only the way to enjoy life, but to act rightly in it. Such a turn of mind will enable us, and no other can, to judge reasonably both of things and persons; to discern how far men's actions and designs are justifiable or otherwise; and what allowance ought to be made, as often surely not a little ought, for early prejudices, warm passions, strong provocations, alluring prospects, easy mistakes, and undesigned neglects. Then further, preserving our own tempers calm is the surest method to compose and win upon others: to open their eyes, to conciliate their esteem; and, which is the great point, that we should have in our view, to make all worthy persons on all sides, of whom it may be hoped there are many more, than we can sometimes believe, agree with one another in whatever is of importance, and bear with one another in whatever is not. With the utmost reason therefore did the apostle give this direction in the last place, of *showing all meek-*

F 2

ness

* Rom. xiv. 15

ness unto all men, as finishing the character of a good subject, and providing completely for the happiness of a nation: that every one should *follow the things, which make for peace**; carry himself with humanity, and prudent friendliness, to each of his fellow-subjects, without exception; moderate his justest zeal with equal charity; and copy, in the whole of his conduct, that most beautiful and excellent character of *Mordecai*, in the last verse of the book of *Esther*; that he was *accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed*. God grant us to be every one thus minded; and reward us with his blessings, on ourselves, our king, and the whole royal family through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

* Rom. xiv. 19.

SER-

S E R M O N CXL.

CONFIRMATION OF DIVINE AUTHORITY; AND ITS IMPORT-
ANCE IN PROMOTING PIETY AND VIRTUE.

ACTS viii. 17.

Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

THE history, to which these words belong, is this: Philip the deacon, ordained at the same time with St Stephen, had converted and baptized the people of Samaria: which the apostles at Jerusalem hearing, sent down to them Peter and John, two of their own body; who, by prayer, accompanied with imposition of hands, obtained for them a greater degree, than they had yet received, of the sacred influences of the Divine Spirit; which undoubtedly was done on their signifying in some manner, so as to be understood, their adherence to the engagement, into which they had entered at their baptism.

From this and the like instances of the practice of the apostles, is derived, what bishops, their successors, though every way beyond comparison inferior to them, have practised ever since, and which we now call Confirmation. Preaching was common to all ranks of ministers: baptizing was performed usually by the lower rank; but, perhaps to maintain a due subordination, it was reserved to the highest, by prayer and laying on of hands, to communicate further measures of the Holy Ghost. It was indeed peculiar to the apostles, that on their intercession, his extraordinary and miraculous gifts were bestowed; which continued in the church no longer than the need of them did; nor can we suppose, that all were partakers of them. But unquestionably by their petitions they procured, for every sincere convert, a much more valuable, though less remarkable blessing, of universal and perpetual necessity, his ordinary and saving graces.

For

For these therefore, after their example, trusting that God will have regard, not to our unworthiness, but to the purposes of mercy which he hath appointed us to serve, we interceed now, when persons take upon themselves the vow of their baptism. For this good end being now come amongst you, though I doubt not but your ministers have given you proper instructions on the occasion ; yet I am desirous of adding somewhat further, which may not only acquaint more fully those, who are especially concerned, with the nature of what they are about to do, but remind you all of the obligations, which Christianity lays upon you. And I cannot perform it better, than by explaining to you the office of Confirmation, to which you may turn in your prayer-books, where it stands immediately after the catechism.

There you will see, in the first place, a preface, directed to be read ; in which notice is given, that *for the more edifying of such as shall receive confirmation*, it shall be administered to none but those, *who can answer to the questions of the catechism preceding* : that *so children may come to years of some discretion*, and learn what the promise made for them in baptism was, before they are called upon to *ratify and confirm it before the church with their own consent*, and to engage that they will observe it.

Prayers may be offered up for infants with very good effect. Promises may be made in their name by such as are authorised to act for them ; especially when the things promised are for their interest, and will be their duty ; which is the case of those in baptism. But no persons ought to make promises for themselves, till they reasonably well understand the nature of them, and are capable of forming serious purposes. Therefore, in the present case, being able to say the words of their catechism is by no means enough, without a competent general knowledge of their meaning, and intention of behaving as it requires them ; which doubtless they are supposed to have at the same time. And if they have not ; making a profession of it, is declaring with their mouths what they feel not in their hearts at the instant, and will much less reflect upon afterwards ; it is hoping to please God by the empty outward performance of a religious rite, from which if they had been withheld till they were duly qualified, their
souls

souls might have been affected, and their conduct influenced by it, as long as they lived.

Therefore I hope and beg, that neither ministers nor parents will be too eager for bringing children very early to confirmation; but first teach them carefully, to know their duty sufficiently, and resolve upon the practice of it heartily; then introduce them to this ordinance; which they shall not fail to have opportunities of attending in their neighbourhood, from time to time, so long as God continues my life and strength.

But as there are some too young for confirmation, some also may be thought too old; especially, if they have received the holy sacrament without it. Now there are not indeed all the same reasons for the confirmation of such, as of others; nor hath the church, I believe, determined any thing about their case, as it might be thought unlikely to happen. But still, since it doth happen too frequently, that persons were not able, or have neglected, to apply for this purpose; so whenever they apply, as by doing it they express a desire to *fulfil all righteousness**; and may certainly receive benefit, both from the profession and the prayers, appointed in the office: my judgment is, that they should not be rejected, but encouraged.

Only I must intreat you to observe, that when you take thus on yourselves the engagement of leading a Christian life, you are to take it once for all; and no more to think of ever being confirmed a second time, than of being baptized a second time.

After directing, who are to be confirmed; the office goes on to direct, how they are to be confirmed. And here, the bishop is to begin with asking every one of those, who offer themselves, whether they *do, in the presence of God and of the congregation, renew in their own persons the solemn vow of their baptism; acknowledging themselves bound to believe and to perform all those things, which their god-fathers and god-mothers then undertook for them.* On which they are each of them to answer, with an audible voice, *I do.*

Now the things, promised in our name, were, to renounce whatever God hath forbidden, to believe what He hath taught,
and

* Matth. iii. 15.

and to practise what He hath commanded. Nobody can promise for infants absolutely, that they shall do these things; but only, that they shall be instructed and admonished to do them: and, it is hoped, not in vain. This instruction and admonition, parents are obliged by nature to give; and if they do it effectually, god-fathers and god-mothers have no further concern, than to be heartily glad of it. But if the former fail, the latter must supply the failure, as far as they have opportunity of doing it with any reasonable prospect of success. For they were intended, not to release the parents from the care of their children, which nothing can: but for a double security, in a case of such importance.

If nothing at all had been promised in our names, we had still been bound, as soon as we were capable of it, to believe in God, and obey him. But we are more early and more firmly bound, as not only this hath been promised for us, but care hath been taken to make us sensible of our obligation to perform it; which obligation therefore, persons are called upon, in the question under consideration, to ratify and confirm. And great cause have they to answer, that they do. For doing it is a duty, on which their eternal felicity peculiarly depends; as a little attention to what I am about to say will clearly show you.

Our first parents even while they were innocent, had no title to happiness, or to existence, but from God's notification of his good pleasure; which being conditional, when they fell, they lost it; and derived to us a corrupt and mortal nature, intitled to nothing; as both the diseases and the poverty of ancestors often descend to their distant posterity. This bad condition we fall not, from our first use of reason, to make worse, in a greater or less degree, by actual transgressions; and so personally deserve the displeasure, instead of favour, of him who made us. Yet we may hope, that, as He is good, He will on our repentance forgive us. But then, as He is also just and wise, and the Ruler of the world; we could never know with certainty, of ourselves, what his justice and wisdom and the honour of his government might require of Him with respect to sinners; whether he would pardon great offences at all; and whether He would reward those, whom He might be pleased not to punish. But most happily the revelation of his holy word hath cleared up all these doubts of
unassisted

unassisted reason ; and offered to the worst of sinners, on the condition of faith in Christ, added to repentance, and productive of good works (for all which He is ready to enable us,) a covenant of pardon for sins past, assistance against sin for the future, and eternal life in return for a sincere, though imperfect, and totally undeserving, obedience.

The method of entering into this covenant is, being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost : that is, into the acknowledgement of the mysterious union and joint authority of these three ; and of the distinct offices, which they have undertaken for our salvation ; together with a faithful engagement of paying suitable regard to each of them. In this appointment of baptism, the washing with water aptly signifies, both our promise to preserve ourselves, with the best care we can, pure from the defilement of sin, and God's promise to consider us, as free from the guilt of it. Baptism then, through his mercy, secures infants from the bad consequences of Adam's transgression, giving them a new title to the immortality which he lost. It also secures, to persons grown up, the intire forgiveness of their own transgressions, on the terms just mentioned. But then, in order to receive these benefits, we must lay our claim to the covenant, which conveys them : we must ratify, as soon as we are able, what was promised in our name by others before we were able ; and done for us then, only on presumption that we would make it our own deed afterwards. For if we neglect, and appear to renounce our part of the covenant, we have plainly not the least right to God's performing his : but we remain in our sins, and *Christ shall profit us nothing* *.

You see then of what unspeakable importance it is, that we take on ourselves the vow of our baptism. And it is very fit and useful that we should take it in such form and manner as the office prescribes. It is fit, that when persons have been properly instructed by the care of their parents, friends, and ministers, they should, with joyful gratitude, acknowledge them to have faithfully performed that kindest duty. It is fit, that before they are admitted by the Church of Christ to the holy communion, they should give public assurance to the church of their Christian belief and Christian purposes. This

* Gal. v. 2.

may also be extremely useful to themselves. For consider, young persons are just entering into a world of temptations, with no experience, and little knowledge to guard them; and much youthful rashness to expose them. The authority of others over them is beginning to lessen, their own passions to increase, *evil communication* to have great opportunities of *corrupting good manners**: and strong impressions, of one kind or another, will be made on them very soon. What can then be more necessary, or more likely to preserve their innocence, than to form the most deliberate resolutions of acting right; and to declare them in a manner, thus adapted to move them at the time, and be remembered by them afterwards; in the presence of God, of a number of his ministers, and of a large congregation of his people, assembled with more than ordinary solemnity for that very purpose?

But then you, that are to be confirmed, must either do your own part, or the whole of this preparation will be utterly thrown away upon you. If you make the answer, which is directed, without sincerity, it is lying to God: if you make it without attention, it is trifling with him. Watch over your hearts therefore, and let them go along with your lips. The two short words, I DO, are soon said: but they comprehend much in them. Whoever uses them on this occasion, saith in effect as follows: "I DO heartily renounce all the temptations
 " of the devil; all the unlawful pleasures, profits, and honours of the world; all the immoral gratifications of the
 " flesh. I DO sincerely believe, and will constantly profess,
 " all the articles of the Christian faith. I DO firmly resolve
 " to keep all God's commandments all the days of my life;
 " to love and honour him; to pray to Him and praise Him
 " daily in private; to attend conscientiously on the public
 " worship and instruction, which he hath appointed; to approach his holy table, as soon as I can qualify myself for
 " doing it worthily; to submit to his blessed will meekly and
 " patiently in all things; to set him ever before my eyes, and
 " acknowledge him in all my ways. I DO further resolve, in
 " the whole course of my behaviour amongst my fellow-creatures to *do justly, love mercy*†, speak truth, be diligent and
 " useful in my station, dutiful to my superiors, condescending
 " to

* 1 Cor. xv. 33.

† Mic. vi. 8.

“to those beneath me, friendly to my equals; careful, through
 “all the relations of life, to act as the nature of them re-
 “quires, and conduct myself so to all men, as I should think
 “it reasonable that they should to me in the like case. Fur-
 “ther yet; I do resolve, in the government of myself, to be
 “modest, sober, temperate, mild, humble, contented; to re-
 “strain every passion and appetite within due bounds; and to
 “set my heart chiefly, not on the sensible enjoyments of this
 “transitory world, but the spiritual happiness of the future
 “endless one. Lastly, I do resolve, whenever I fail in any
 “of these duties, as I am sensible I have, and must fear I
 “shall, to confess it before God with unfeigned concern, to
 “apply for his promised pardon in the name of his blessed
 “Son, to beg the promised assistance of his Holy Spirit; and
 “in that strength, not my own, to strive against my faults,
 “and watch over my steps with redoubled care.”

Observe then, It is not gloominess and melancholy, that religion calls you to: it is not useless austerity, and abstinence from things lawful and safe; it is not extravagant flights and raptures: it is not unmeaning or unedifying forms and ceremonies: much less is it bitterness against those who differ from you. But the forementioned unquestionable substantial duties are the things to which you bind yourselves, when you pronounce the awful words, I do. Utter them then with the truest seriousness; and say to yourselves, each of you, afterwards, as Moses did to the Jews, *Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, to walk in his ways and keep his statutes, and to hearken to his voice: and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his; that thou shouldst keep all his commandments, and be holy unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken* *. It is a certain truth, call it therefore often to mind, and fix it in your souls, that if breaking a solemn promise to men be a sin; breaking that which you make thus deliberately to God, would be unspeakably a greater sin.

But let us now proceed to the next part of the office; in which, after persons have confirmed and ratified the vow of their baptism, prayers are offered up, that God would confirm and strengthen them in their purpose: on both which accounts this appointment is called Confirmation.

G 2

Scripture

* Deut. xxvi. 17, 18, 19.

Scripture teaches, and sad experience proves, that of ourselves we can do nothing; are not sufficient * for the discharge of our duty, without God's continual aid: by which he can certainly influence our minds, without hurting our natural freedom of will, and even without our perceiving it: for we can influence our fellow-creatures so. Nor is it any injustice in him to require of us what exceeds our ability, since he is ready to supply the want of it. Indeed, on the contrary, as this method of treating us is excellently fitted both to keep us humble, and yet to give us courage, using it is evidently worthy of God. But then, as none can have reason to expect his help, but those who earnestly desire it, so he hath promised to give the Holy Spirit only to them that ask him †. And to unite Christians more in love to each other, and incline them more to assemble for public worship, our blessed Redeemer hath especially promised, that where two or three of them are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them ‡. And further still, to promote a due regard in his people to their teachers and rulers, the sacred writings ascribe a peculiar efficacy to their praying over those who are committed to their charge. Even under the Jewish dispensation, the family of Aaron were told, that *them the Lord had separated to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the Lord §: and they shall put my name, saith God, upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them ||*. No wonder then, if under the Christian dispensation we read, but just before the text, that the apostles, *when they were come down to Samaria, prayed for the new-baptized converts, that they might receive the Holy Ghost*; and in the text, that they did receive it accordingly.

Therefore, pursuant to these great authorities, here is, on the present occasion, a number of young disciples, about to run the same common race, met together to pray for themselves and one another: here is a number of elder Christians, who have experienced the dangers of life, met to pray for those who are just entering into them: here are also God's ministers, purposely come, to intercede with him in their behalf: and surely we may hope, their joint and fervent petitions will avail, and be effectual.

They

* John xv. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5.

† Luke xi. 13.

‡ Matth. xviii. 20.

§ Deut. x. 8. xxi. 5.

Numb. vi. 27.

They begin, as they ought, with acknowledging, and in scripture words, that *our help is in the name of the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth**: it is not in man to direct his own steps†; but his Creator only can preserve him. Then we go on to pronounce *the name of the Lord blessed, henceforth world without end*, for his readiness to bestow on us the grace we want. And lastly, in confidence of his goodness, we intreat him to *bear our prayers, and let our cry come unto him‡*.

After these preparatory ejaculations, and the usual admonition to be attentive, *Let us pray*; comes a longer act of devotion, which first commemorates God's mercy already bestowed, then petitions for an increase of it. The commemoration sets forth, that he *hath regenerated these his servants by water and the Holy Ghost*: that is, intitled them by baptism to the enlivening influences of the Spirit, and so, as it were, begotten them again into a state, inexpressibly happier than their natural one; a covenant-state, in which God will consider them, whilst they keep their engagements, with peculiar love, as his dear children. It follows, that he *hath given unto them forgiveness of all their sins*; meaning, that He hath given them assurance of it, on the gracious terms of the gospel. But that every one of them hath actually received it, by complying with those terms since he sinned last, though we may charitably hope, we cannot presume to affirm: nor were these words intended to affirm it; as the known doctrine of the Church of England fully proves. And therefore let no one misunderstand this expression in the office, which hath parallel ones in the New Testament||, so as either to censure it, or delude himself with a fatal imagination, that any thing said over him can possibly convey to him a pardon of sins, for which he is not truly penitent. We only acknowledge, with due thankfulness, that God hath done his part: but which of the congregation have done theirs, their own consciences must tell them.

After this commemoration, we go on to request for the persons before us, that God would strengthen them against all temptation, and support them under all affliction, by *the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them his manifold gifts*
of

* Psal. cxxiv. 8. † Jer. x. 23. ‡ Psal. cii. 1. || Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14.

of grace: which gifts we proceed to enumerate in seven particulars, taken from the Prophet Isaiah *; by whom they are ascribed to our blessed Redeemer: but as *the same mind* ought to be in us, which was in Christ Jesus†, a petition for them was used, in the office of Confirmation, 1400 years ago, if not sooner. The separate meaning of each of the seven, it is neither easy nor needful to determine with certainty. For indeed, if no more was designed, than to express very fully and strongly, by various words of nearly the same import, a pious and moral temper of mind: this is a manner of speaking both common and emphatical. But each of them may be taken in a distinct sense of its own. And thus we may beg for these our fellow-christians, a *sprit of wisdom*, to aim at the right end, the salvation of their souls: and *of understanding*, to pursue it by right means; *of counsel*, to form good purposes; and of *ghostly* or spiritual *strength*, to execute them: of useful *knowledge* in the doctrines of religion; and *true godliness*, disposing them to a proper use of it. But chiefly, though lastly, we pray, that they may be *filled with the Spirit of God's holy fear*: with that reverence of him, as the greatest and purest and best of beings, the rightful proprietor and just Judge of all, which will effectually excite them to whatever they are concerned to believe or do. For *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom* ‡.

Having concluded this prayer for them all in general, the Bishop implores the Divine Protection and grace for each one, or each pair of them, in particular: that as he is already God's professed child and servant, by the recognition which he hath just made of his baptismal covenant, so *he may continue his for ever*, by faithfully keeping it: and, far from decaying, *daily increase in his holy Spirit*, that is, in the fruits of the Spirit, piety and virtue, *more and more*; making greater and quicker advances in them, as life goes on, until he come to that decisive hour, when his portion shall be unchangeable in God's everlasting kingdom.

And, along with the utterance of these solemn words, he lays his hand on each of their heads; a ceremony used from the earliest ages by religious persons, when they prayed for God's blessing on any one; used by our Saviour, who, when
children

* Isa. xi. 2.

† Phil. ii. 5.

‡ Psal. cxl. 10.

children were brought to him, that he should put his hands on them, and pray, and bless them, was much displeased * with those who forbad it; used by the apostles, after converts were baptized, as the text plainly shews; reckoned in the epistle to the Hebrews among the foundations of the Christian profession †; constantly practised, and highly esteemed in the Church from that time to this; and so far from being a popish ceremony, that the papists administer Confirmation by other ceremonies of their own devising, and have laid aside this primitive one; which therefore our church very prudently restored. And the custom of it is approved, as apostolical, both by Luther and Calvin, and several of their followers, though they rashly abolished it, as having been abused ‡. But I am credibly informed, that at Geneva it hath lately been restored.

The laying on of the hand naturally expresses good will and good wishes in the person who doth it; and in the present case is further intended, as you will find in one of the following prayers, to *certify those, to whom it is done, of God's favour and gracious goodness towards them*: of which goodness they will certainly feel the effects, provided, which must always be understood, that they preserve their title to his care by a proper care of themselves. This, it must be owned, is a truth: and we may as innocently signify it by this sign as by any other, or as by any words to the same purpose. Further efficacy we do not ascribe to it: nor would have you look on Bishops, as having or claiming a power in any case, to confer blessings arbitrarily on whom they please; but only as petitioning God for that blessing from above which he alone can give; yet, we justly hope, will give the rather for the prayers of those whom he hath placed over his people, unless your own unworthiness prove an impediment. Not that you are to expect, on the performance of this good office, any sudden and sensible change in your hearts, giving you, all at once, a remarkable strength or comfort in piety, which you never felt before. But you may reasonably promise yourselves, from going through it with a proper disposition, greater measures, when real occasion requires them, of such Divine assistance as will

* Matth. xix. 13,—15. Mark x. 13,—16. † Heb. vi. 1.

‡ See Camfield's two discourses on Episcopal Confirmation, 8vo, 1682. page 23,—36.

will be needful for your support and orderly growth in every virtue of a Christian life.

And now, the Imposition of hands being finished, the Bishop and Congregation mutually recommend each other to God, and return to such joint and public devotions as are suitable to the solemnity. The first of these is the Lord's Prayer: a form seasonable always, but peculiarly now; as every petition in it will show to every one who considers it. In the next place, more especial supplications are poured forth, for the persons particularly concerned, to him who alone can enable them *both to will and to do what is good*; that, as the hand of his minister hath been laid upon them, so *his fatherly hand may ever be over them, and lead them in the only way, the knowledge and obedience of his word, to everlasting life*. After this, a more general prayer is offered up for them and the rest of the congregation together, that God would *vouchsafe*, unworthy as we all are, *so to direct and govern both our hearts and bodies, our inclinations and actions, (for neither will suffice without the other) in the ways of his laws, and in the works of his commandments, that, through his most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul*: having the former, in his good time, raised up from the dead, and the latter made happy, in conjunction with it, to all eternity.

These requests being thus made, it only remains, that all be dismissed with a solemn blessing: which will certainly abide with you, unless, by wilful sin or gross negligence, you drive it away. And in that case, you must not hope, that your baptism, or your confirmation, or the prayers of the bishop, or the church, or the whole world, will do you any service. On the contrary, every thing which you might have been the better for, if you had made a good use of it, you will be the worse for, if you make a bad one. You do well to renew the covenant of your baptism in confirmation: but, if you break it, you forfeit the benefit of it. You do well to repeat your vows in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper: it is what all Christians are commanded to do by their dying Saviour, *for the strengthening and refreshing of their souls*: it is what I beg all, who are confirmed, will remember, and their friends and ministers remind them of; the sooner they are prepared for it, the happier; and by stopping short, the benefit of what preceded

preceded will be lost. But if you are admitted to this privilege also, and live wickedly, you do but *eat and drink your own condemnation*. So that all depends on a thoroughly honest care of your hearts and behaviour in all respects.

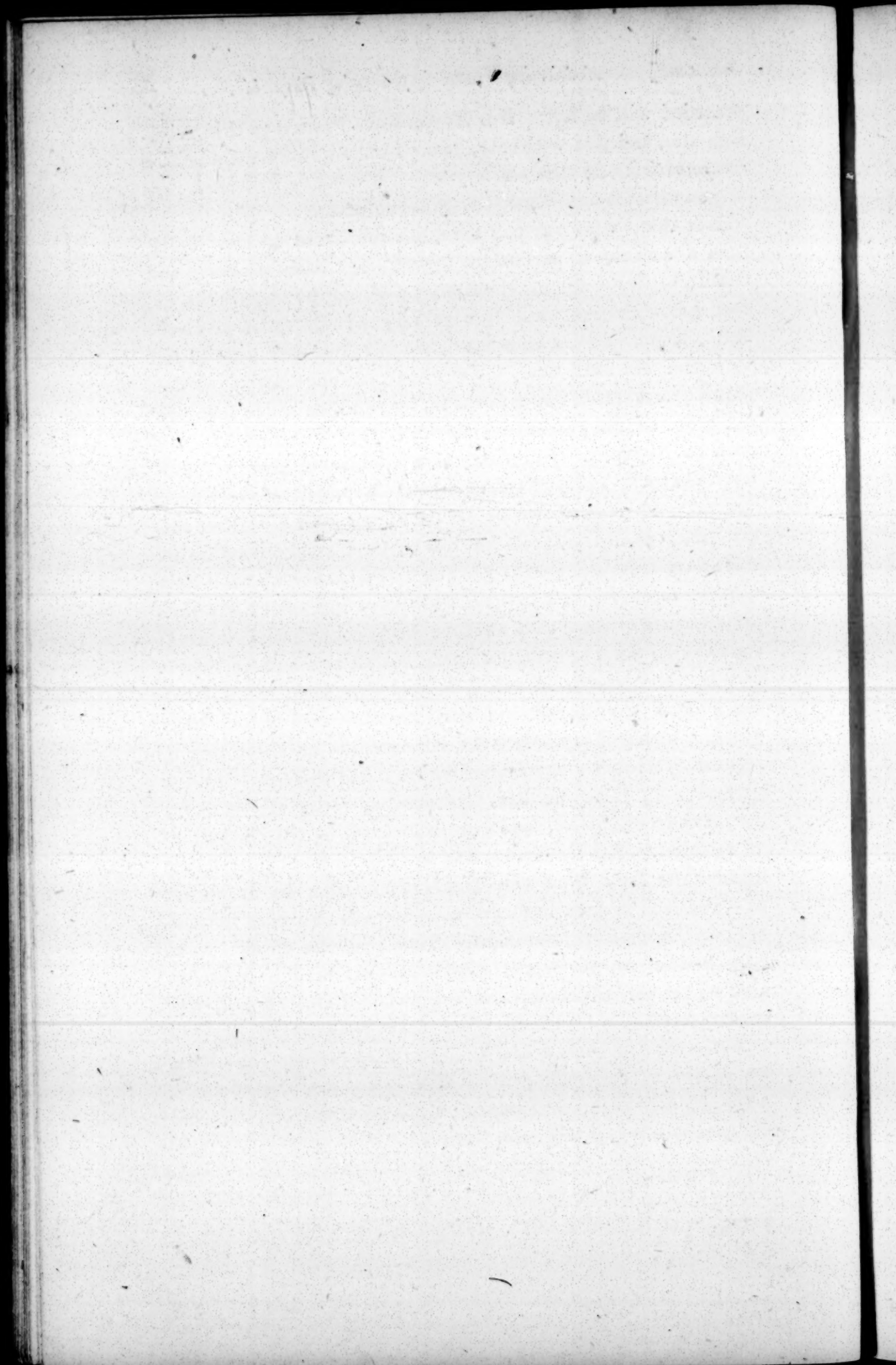
Not that, with our best care, we can avoid smaller faults. And if we intreat pardon for them in our daily prayers, and faithfully strive against them, they will not be imputed to us. But gross and habitual sins we may avoid, through God's help; and if we fall into them, we fall from our title to salvation at the same time. Yet even then our case is not desperate; and let us not make it so, by thinking it is; for, thro' the grace of the gospel, we may still repent and amend, and then be forgiven. But I beg you to observe, that, as continued health is vastly preferable to the happiest recovery from sickness; so is innocence to the truest repentance. If we suffer ourselves to transgress our duty; God knows whether we shall have time to repent; God knows whether we shall have a heart to do it. At best we shall have lost, and more than lost, the whole time that we have been going back; whereas we have all need to press forwards, as fast as we can. Therefore let the innocent of wilful sin preserve themselves so with the greatest circumspection; and the faulty return from their errors without delay. Let the young enter upon the way of righteousness with hearty resolution; and those of riper age persevere in it to the end. In a word, let us all, of every age, seriously consider, and faithfully practise, the obligations of religion. For *the vows of God are still upon us**, how long soever it be since they were first made, either by us, or for us; and it is in vain to forget what he will assuredly remember; or hope to be safe in neglecting what he expects us to do. But let us use proper diligence; and he will infallibly give us proper assistance, and *confirm us all unto the end, that we may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ†*.

Now unto him, who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen ‡.

* Psal. lvi. 12.

† 1 Cor. i. 8.

‡ Jude 24, 25.



E I G H T

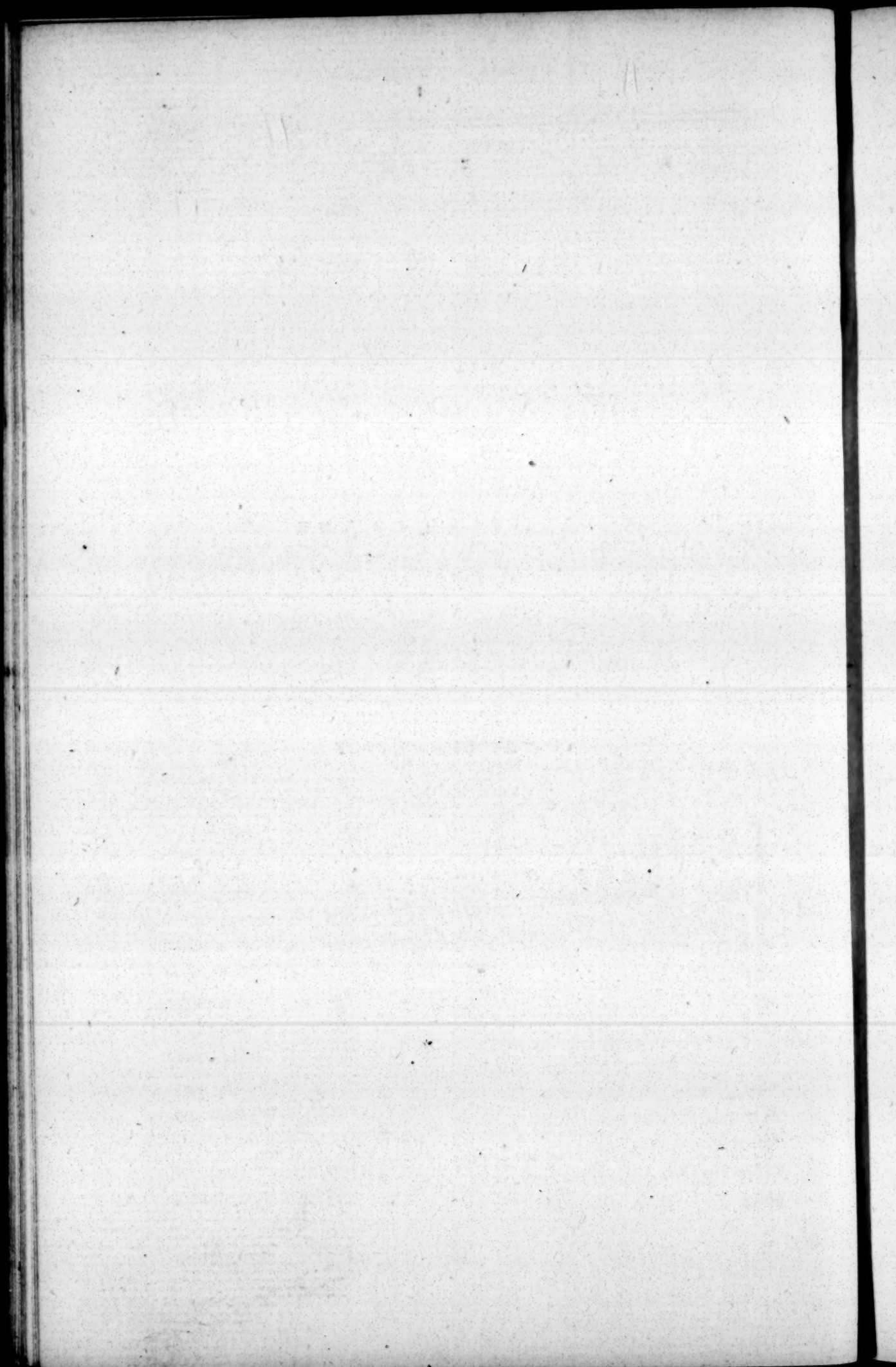
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PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

I AM very sensible, that you cannot meet together on this occasion, without making deep reflections on the loss, which you have suffered, for the public good, by the removal of a Pastor, whom the experience of so many years hath taught you to esteem and honour so highly. It is your farther unhappiness, that he is succeeded by a person, very unequal to the care of this conspicuous and important Diocese. But your humanity and your piety will, I doubt not, incline you, both to accept and to assist the endeavours of one, who can assure you, with very great truth, that he is earnestly desirous of being as useful to you all as he can; and seriously concerned for the interests of religion, and of this church. Would to God there were less need of expressing a concern for them, than there is at present!

Men

Men have always complained of their own times ; and always with too much reason. But though it is natural to think those evils the greatest, which we feel ourselves ; and therefore mistakes are easily made, in comparing one age with another ; yet in this we cannot be mistaken, that an open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age ; that this evil is grown to a great height in the metropolis of the nation ; is daily spreading through every part of it ; and, bad in itself as any can be, must of necessity bring in most others after it. Indeed it hath already brought in such dissoluteness, and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance, and fearlessness of committing crimes, in the lower, as must, if this torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal. And God knows, far from stopping, it receives, through the ill designs of some persons, and the inconsiderateness of others, a continual increase. Christianity is now ridiculed and railed at, with very little reserve ; and the teachers of it, without any at all. Indeed, with respect to us, the rule, which most of our adversaries appear to have set themselves, is, to be, at all adventures, as bitter as they can ; and they follow it, not only beyond truth, but beyond probability ; asserting the very worst things of us without foundation, and exaggerating every thing without mercy ; imputing the faults, and sometimes imaginary faults, of particular persons to the whole order ; and then declaiming against us all promiscuously with such wild vehemence, as, in any case but ours, they themselves would think, in the highest degree, unjust and cruel. Or if sometimes a few exceptions are made, they are usually made only to divide us amongst ourselves ; to deceive one part of us, and throw a greater odium upon the other. Still, were these invectives only to affect us personally, dear as our reputations are and ought to be to us, the mischief would be small, in comparison of what it is. But the consequence hath been, as it naturally must, that disregard to us hath greatly increased the disregard to public worship and instruction ; that many are grown prejudiced against religion ; many more, indifferent about it and unacquainted with it. And the emissaries of the Romish church, taking the members of ours at this unhappy disadvantage, have begun to reap great harvests in the field, which

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hath thus been prepared for them by the labours of those, who would be thought their most irreconcilable enemies.

Yet, however melancholy the view before us appears, we have no reason to be discouraged ; for let us take care of our duty, and God will take care of the event. But we have great reason to think seriously, what our duty on this occasion is ; and stir up each other to the performance of it ; that where-ever the guilt of these things may fall, it may not fall on our heads. *For it must needs be, that offences come : but wo to that man, by whom the offence cometh**. Our grief for the decay of religion might be attended with much comfort in regard to ourselves, could we but truly say, that no faults or infirmities of ours had ever given advantages against it. But though, God be thanked, we are far from being what our adversaries would represent us ; whose reproaches perhaps were never less deserved, than now when they are the most violent ; yet, it must be owned, we are not by any means, even the best of us, what we ought to be. And the present state of things calls loudly upon us, to correct our mistakes, to supply our deficiencies, and do all we are able for the honour of God, and the happiness of mankind.

If we can be unconcerned now, we have neither piety nor common prudence in us. And if we are concerned in earnest, we shall be very desirous, both to avoid all wrong methods of showing it, and to make use of all right ones.

Complaining of our superiors for those evils, which perhaps they cannot prevent ; or complaining of them with disrespect, for what we may apprehend they could prevent, would both be undutiful and imprudent conduct : would give our adversaries joy, and do our cause harm. Indeed, to beg earnestly of God, that he would direct the hearts of those, who preside over the public welfare ; and humbly to represent to them, on all fit occasions, the declining state of religion, the importance and the means of preserving it ; these things are unquestionable duties. But then we must always approve ourselves, at the same time, conscientiously loyal both in word and deed ; reasonable in our expectations ; sincerely grateful for the protection, which we are assured of enjoying ; and duly sensible, that every thing of value to us, in this world,

depends

depends on the support of that government, under which we now live. We cannot be good men, if we are bad subjects : and we are not wise men, if we permit ourselves to be suspected of it.

A second proper caution is, That to speak unfavourably of liberty, religious or civil, instead of carefully distinguishing both from the many abuses of them, which we daily see ; or to encourage any other restraints on either, than public utility makes evidently needful ; can only serve to increase that jealousy, which, being in former ages grounded too well, hath been most industriously heightened, when there never was so little pretence of ground for it ; that the claims of the clergy are hurtful to the rights of mankind. It concerns us greatly to remove so dangerous a prejudice against us, as this : not by renouncing those powers, which the gospel hath given us ; for we are bound to assert them ; but by convincing the world, that they are perfectly innocent ; and avoiding all appearance of assuming what we have no right to : by showing our abhorrence of tyranny, especially over the consciences of men ; and satisfying them fully, if possible, that *we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus, the Lord ; and ourselves, their servants, for his sake* *. Then, with respect to the privileges, that we derive from human authority ; as, on the one hand, receding from any of them without cause is only inviting fresh encroachments, and giving needless advantages to such as will be sure to lose none ; so, on the other, straining them too far is the likeliest way to destroy them all at once ; and both our usefulness and our security depend very much, on our appearing plainly to desire nothing inconsistent with the common good ; to have the truest concern for all reasonable liberty, and to be zealous only against licentiousness and confusion.

Thirdly, If we should be tempted to oppose profaneness, by encouraging the opposite extreme of superstition ; this also would be unjustifiable in itself ; would have bad effects upon as many as we might mislead ; and give great opportunities to all that should see them misled, either of accusing religion, or exposing us, as corrupters of religion. Not that we are to give up inconsiderately, whatever some persons are pleased to charge

* 2 Cor. iv. 5.

charge with superstition ; for there would be no end of concessions at that rate ; but only to avoid encouraging any thing, that can be justly charged with it ; and then we shall stand upon sure ground. For nothing can be more unjust, than those imputations of it, which our adversaries are so fond of throwing, some upon Christianity itself, others on the doctrine and worship of that church, of which, through God's merciful providence, we have the happiness to be members.

Another very pernicious error would be, if we should think to serve our cause by intemperate warmth in it. Christian zeal indeed is a duty, that never was more needful, and never less shown. But passion will do no good. If expressed against those who are indifferent about religion, it will turn them into enemies : if against the enemies of religion, it will make them yet more vehement enemies. Besides, the extravagant things, that men say and attempt against us and our profession, are not always designed injuries ; but frequently the effects of misrepresentations, and prejudices, that have imperceptibly taken hold on persons, who otherwise mean tolerably well. Now, mildness to such as these is but justice : and to all others, it is prudence. Railing is the province which our adversaries have chosen : and let us leave it to them. For whatever success they may meet with that way, as indeed they excel in it, we shall meet with none : but only make the spirit of Christianity be misunderstood and ill spoken of, by our own want of it. Therefore, how injuriously soever we may be treated, let us return neither injurious nor harsh treatment for it : nor endeavour to mark out those persons for objects of popular hatred, who are ever so unwearied in labouring to make us so. Yet, at the same time, we must never court irreligious men by wrong compliances ; never contribute to increase their power of doing harm ; never desert our duty, either for fear of them, or favour from them. But then let us defend both religion and ourselves, with that fairness and decency, as well as courage, which becomes our function : acknowledge ingenuously whatever can be alledged against us with truth, only claiming equitable allowances ; and where charges are untrue, yet use mild expostulations, not reproaches ; and try to shame our opposers by the reasonableness of what we say, rather than exasperate them by the vehemence

of it. They indeed have little cause either to complain or to triumph, if, under such gross provocations as they give, our temper sometimes fails: but we have great cause to do our utmost, that it fail not.

And if undue severity of speech must be forborn towards professed enemies; much more to those, who may, for aught we know, design themselves for friends. Indeed, when it is evident, that men only put on a pretence of wishing well to Christianity, or the teachers of it; and, whilst they affect to charge us with uncharitableness for questioning their sincerity, would despise us for believing them: there we must be allowed to see what plainly appears: and to speak of them, both as adversaries, and unfair ones. Or when doctrines, whatever the intention of propagating them be, are inconsistent either with the whole or any part of our religion; it is no uncharitableness, but our duty, to lay open the falsehood and the danger of them. Nay, supposing only the legal establishment of religion, or some branch of it, be attacked; yet the attempt may both be injurious enough to us, and detrimental enough to the public, to deserve a vigorous opposition. But to shew passion and bitterness in any of these cases; to take pleasure in making mens mistakes or designs thought worse than they are; to judge harshly of them with respect to another world, or expose them to ill usage in this; to refuse them due allowances for human infirmity, or be more backward to own their merits, than to see their faults: such behaviour, instead of promoting truth, will prejudice the world against it; will give unbelievers dreadful advantages, and for ever prevent that union amongst Christians, which would procure us, above all things, the esteem of men, and the blessing of God.

From these improper methods of supporting religion, let us now proceed to the proper ones. And they will naturally fall under the general heads, of our instructions and our lives.

Giving instruction requires knowledge. And therefore, as a competent degree of it is justly expected of persons, before they enter into holy orders: so, when they enter, the care of making a continual progress in it is solemnly promised by them, and covenanted for with them. What may be a very good beginning, is by no means a sufficient stock to go on with;

with; and even that will lessen, if no pains be taken to increase it. Continued application then is a duty of importance. Persons of lower abilities and attainments are in danger, without it, of being useless and despised: And they, who set out with greater advantages, are bound to endeavour at doing, in proportion, greater services to the Church of God. Without exception therefore, all who are engaged in so serious an employment as ours, if they have any regard either to their duty or their character, must take care not to be more remarkable for their diversions than their studies; nor indolently to trifle their time away, instead of employing it to good purposes. And though most parts of learning will be useful to us, and all parts ornamental; yet we must be sure to remember, what we have been solemnly admonished of, that no attention to any thing else, ought ever to draw us away from the pursuit of such knowledge, as is properly theological. For to excel in other things, and be deficient in that, cannot but cast a grievous reflection; either on us, for not studying what we profess; or on our profession, as having little in it worth studying. Our principal business therefore must be, to obtain a thorough acquaintance with the Christian faith: first the grounds, then the doctrines of it. And the previous qualifications for attempting this are, a due knowledge of the rules of right reasoning, and of the moral and religious truths which nature teaches; of the state of the world in its earlier ages, and in that when Christianity first appeared. These preparations being made, the great thing requisite in the next place is a diligent search into holy scripture. For there it is, that both the authentic system of our belief, and the chief evidence for it, are exhibited to our view. Scripture therefore, above all things, the infidel endeavours to ridicule; the mistaken Christian, to wrest in support of his errors: and if we desire, either to confute them, or to satisfy ourselves; our only way must be, to understand it well. For which end it is quite necessary, that we make the original language, at least of the New Testament, familiar to us: and were that of the old more commonly studied, the advantages would be very considerable.

In order to see clearly, on what grounds our belief stands; together with the sacred volumes themselves, the writings of

such learned persons, as have proved their authority, and vindicated their accounts of things, must be carefully read; and attentively compared with those objections against them, which have been revived of late, dressed up with so much art, and spread abroad with so much diligence. For in our present circumstances we are always liable to be attacked: and consider, what an unhappy triumph it would afford, should we be found unprovided of a rational defence. It is very true, the general evidence, which we have for our faith, is abundantly sufficient of itself, to overbalance many difficulties concerning it, and ever so many evils against it. But yet our being unqualified to give more particular answers, where they can be given; as indeed there are few cases, where they cannot; may often prove a great reproach to us, and a great stumbling-block to others.

Next to the grounds of religion, the doctrines of it, especially the more important and disputed ones, ought to be studied, with such diligence and impartiality, as may best discover to us the nature of every opinion, and the force of every argument: that so we may neither load Christianity with what doth not belong to it; nor betray, instead of defending it, by giving up what doth; but faithfully *keep that which is committed to our trust* *, both entire and unmixed. To secure this great end, we must ever adhere strictly to the word of God, fairly interpreted by the help of all such means as providence hath given; and carefully avoid, on the one hand, fondness of novelty; and on the other, over-great reverence of antiquity, especially such as comes short of the earliest. But against the former of these, it is peculiarly needful to caution the rising generation; whom the rashness of youth, and the petulant spirit of the present age, too often hurries into a strange vehemence for any imagination, which they have happened to take up; and prompts them to fly out against established doctrines, without having always the patience even to understand them. Such therefore should be exhorted to learn a proper degree, both of silence and suspense, till cooler thoughts, and farther inquiry, make them fitter judges of things. But besides those controversies, to which this caution chiefly relates; that between the papists and us deserves

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* 1 Tim. vi. 20.

at present to be well studied, by such of you as live in the neighbourhood of any. For seldom have they shewn more zeal or more artifice, than of late, in their attempts of making profelytes. And therefore it is of great consequence, that we provide ourselves against them, with a sufficient knowledge of their real doctrines, their most specious pleas, and the proper answers to them. Another subject, with which we are concerned to be well acquainted is, what relates to the government and worship, discipline and establishment of our own church. Different parts of our ecclesiastical constitution are frequently censured, by different sorts of persons, with very different views: though indeed the most opposite of them have appeared, for some time, unaccountably disposed to unite against us; and believers to join with infidels in using their Christian brethren ill. It may therefore be of great use, to inform ourselves diligently concerning every thing of this nature, which is spoken of to our prejudice; and be always ready to shew the genuine state of the case, with mildness and fairness. But no controversies, however needful, must be suffered to divert our attention from what is of all things the most needful, the study of practical religion, and of the common duties of life. These are the things which mankind are most apt to fail in, and most concerned not to fail in; and therefore spending much time upon them, obtaining a thorough insight into them, and having a deep sense of them, is the very foundation of doing good, both to others and to our own souls.

A competent provision of knowledge being supposed, the next thing is communicating it to those who are under our care, in such manner as their circumstances require.

The proofs of religion, both natural and revealed, all men should be taught, and especially at present, in the most intelligible and convincing manner. As for the objections against either: such as it may be supposed they have thought or heard of, should be distinctly answered; but the rest obviated only, as occasion offers. For to enter into them farther, would be mispending time. Next to the truth of religion, they should have its importance laid before them. The necessity of a moral life most men will own in general terms: only what they are pleased to call so, is often a very immoral one, both with respect to their fellow-creatures, and the government of themselves.

selves. But regard to piety is strangely lost, even amongst persons that are otherwise tolerably serious. Many have laid aside all appearances of it: and others, who would seem to keep them up, do it with evident marks of indifference and contempt. It should therefore be industriously shown, and inculcated, that an inward sense of love and duty to God, founded on just conceptions of him, and expressing itself in frequent acts of worship, constant obedience and resignation to him, is in truth *the first and great commandment* *, the principal and most important of moral obligations. But then, besides those instances of piety, which reason requires of us, there are others, founded on relations equally real, and consequently deserving equal regard, enjoined by revelation. The utmost care therefore ought to be used, considering the present disposition of the world, to convince men of what moment the doctrines and duties of the gospel are. To make reason sufficient for nothing in religion, is to overturn every thing. But to insist on its insufficiency for many most valuable purposes, which revelation is fully sufficient for, and on the necessity of observing whatever God hath thought fit to command, this is doing but common justice, though a very seasonable piece of justice, to the doctrine of our blessed Saviour, and the authority of our Maker.

When once men are brought to understand the value of Christianity, the next thing is, to give them a proportionable solicitude for them: to make them observe, how visibly the belief and practice of it decay, and how dreadful the consequences must be and are; to show them, that religion is not the concern of the clergy merely, but the common concern of all men; the great thing, on which public and private happiness depends in this life, as well as eternal felicity in the next; that therefore, if they have any value for these important interests, they must take the necessary means of securing them; their children, their servants and dependants must be diligently watched over and instructed; private devotion must be practised, family-worship revived, and the service of God in the church regularly and seriously attended upon. For laying aside these things hath almost banished religion from amongst us; and nothing, but restoring them, can bring it back.

Piety

* Matth. xxii. 38.

Piety is indeed seated in the heart ; but to give it no vent in outward expression, is to stifle and extinguish it. Neglecting the public exercise of religion, is destroying the public regard to it ; and teaching men to despise their own form of religion, is enough very often to make them despise it under any form.

Great pains have been taken by our adversaries to give the world an ill opinion of religious instruction ; and we must take equal pains to give them a good one of it ; by representing to them, both the natural influence it hath, and the divine authority that enjoins it. But after all, the effectual conviction will be that of experience. And therefore the chief point is, to endeavour that men may feel the benefit of our teaching ; feel at least, that it is their own fault, not ours, if they do not become the wiser, the better and happier for it. To this end, we must all dwell often and strongly on the great duties, and great failures of duty, in common life : first explaining the obligations of religion so as that they may be practised : then insisting on it, that they must : entering into the particulars of each with such plainness, that every one may clearly see his own faults laid before him ; yet with such prudence, that no one may so much as imagine himself personally pointed at : and taking the strictest care, that no part of what we say may seem in the least to proceed from our own passions, or our own interests ; but all appear evidently to flow from a true concern for the good of those that hear us. Diligent consideration, what our subject and our several characters will bear us out in, must direct us, when to give our judgment with diffidence, when to lay stress upon it : in what cases to *exhort with all long-suffering* * ; in what, to *rebuke with all authority* †. But whichever we do, neither our language should be florid, nor our manner theatrical : for these things only raise an useless admiration in weak persons, and produce great contempt in judicious ones. Nor yet on the other hand, should our expressions be mean, or our behaviour lifeless ; but both must be suitable to the employment we are upon ; both be such as come naturally from the heart of the speaker, and therefore will naturally move that of the hearer.

To this our public teaching it will be a great help, and indeed

* 2 Tim. iv. 2.

† Tit. ii. 15.

deed a valuable part of it, if we perform the several offices of our excellent Liturgy devoutly and properly; neither with an irreverent precipitation, nor a tedious slowness; neither in a flat and languid manner, nor yet with an affected liveliness, or a vehemence ill-placed or over-done; but so as may best express the sense and the importance of what we read; and, by showing our own attention to it, engage that of all around us.

Besides our general instructions, it is very needful, that we give the youth under our care, in particular, an early knowledge and love of religion, that may abide with them; and stand the trials, to which their riper years will of course be exposed. I hope you are all diligent in that most useful work of catechising; and have done your utmost to prepare for confirmation, those whom you present to me. And I earnestly recommend it to you, that the good impressions, which may well be supposed to have been made upon their minds at this season, be not suffered to wear off again; but be improved into settled habits of religion and virtue, by still farther exhortations, and leading them, as soon as possible, to the holy communion. But, though all the youth deserve our peculiar attention; yet if any of them be educated in charity-schools under our inspection, for these we should think ourselves still more nearly concerned, than for the rest; and, by first taking care, to have them taught whatever is proper, and nothing else, then making known the good management they are under, put an end to those accusations, of their learning idleness and pride, superstition and disloyalty; which may have been, sometimes one of them, sometimes another, in some degree deserved; but have been carried with a wicked industry most shamefully beyond truth, and lessened the credit of this excellent institution, even with many good persons, to the great detriment of Christianity.

Another very useful method of spreading the knowledge of religion, and teaching men a serious regard to it, is by distributing, or procuring to be distributed, such pious books, especially to the poorer sort, as are best suited to their capacities and circumstances. For there is great variety of them to be had; and at so very low prices, that much good may be done this way to considerable numbers at once, in a most acceptable manner, for a trifling expence.

But

But nothing will contribute more to make our public instructions effectual, than private conversation, directed with prudence to the same end. The better we are known to persons, the greater influence we may hope to have upon them; and the better we know them, the more distinctly we shall see how to make use of that influence to good purposes. By representing proper truths, at fit times, with a modest freedom, we may very much abate the prejudices of men, who have any fairness remaining, both against religion and ourselves: at least we may prevail on them, for the sake of public order, and example, to keep within the bounds of decency; and so prevent their doing harm, if we cannot make them good. Persons that err in particular points of doctrine, friendly discourse may shew us what led them into their mistakes, and enable us to lead them out again. Such as dissent from our church-government and worship, talking amicably with them, and behaving in the same manner towards them, if it doth not immediately bring them over, may however bring them nearer to us, both in judgment and affection. Such as are faulty in their moral conduct, serious and affectionate remonstrances, given in private and kept private, and joined with a tenderness to their characters in public, may often do a great deal towards reforming them; and, sooner or later, the seed thus sown may spring up in their hearts, and produce happy fruits. We should not indeed press upon persons, when there is no other prospect than that of provoking them: but we ought to watch all opportunities, whilst there is any hope left; and not only make it our endeavour to convert the mistaken and vicious, but stir up the negligent to serious thought, and the good themselves to more eminent goodness. Especially such persons of rank and influence, as we find well disposed, these we must earnestly excite to appear and give countenance to the cause of religion, ever remembering that awful declaration of our blessed Lord: *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels* *. We must convince them of the urgent necessity there is, for interposing in behalf of piety and

Vol. IV. K virtue;

* Mark viii. 38.

virtue; and suggest to them the means for engaging with success in this excellent employment. Yet must we never spend so much of our attention on the higher part of the world, as to give the least suspicion of neglecting the lower; whose number is so much larger, whose dispositions are usually so much more favourable to religion, and whose eternal happiness is of equal importance to them, and ought to be of equal concern to us; but we must prove we are in earnest in our work, by making it our care, as it was our Master's, that *the poor have the gospel preached to them* *. And one opportunity of preaching it with singular advantage, both to the poor and the rich, is when sickness brings near to them the view of another life. At some times indeed the sick may be incapable of attending to exhortations: at others they may be endangered by them: and at all times great prudence is requisite, to avoid the extremes, of terrifying or indulging them too much. But, provided due caution be used in these respects; laying before them what they ought to be, and reminding them to consult their own consciences what they have been, is a most likely method of exciting in them such affections and resolutions at that season of recollection and seriousness, as, through the blessing of Heaven, may produce the happiest effects.

To these excellent offices, therefore, we must all of us cheerfully apply ourselves, each in such degree as his station requires. If they do require pains, if they do take up time, if they are inconsistent with agreeable amusements, and even interrupt useful studies of other kinds; yet this is the business which we have solemnly chosen, and the vows of God are upon us; it is the most important and most honourable, it ought to be the most delightful too of all employments: and therefore we have every reason not to seek the means of evading our duty, but of fulfilling it; and each to *take the oversight of the flock of God*, committed to him, *not by constraint, but willingly* †. For if we only just do what we can be punished by our superiors for neglecting, we must neither expect success nor reward.

But then to secure either, the chief thing requisite is still behind; that our own tempers and lives be such, as we say
those

* Matth. xi. 5.

† 1 Pet. v. 2.

those of other persons should. For if we, who teach religion, live, or suffer our families to live, with little or no sense of religion, what can we possibly expect, but that men will improve so palpable an advantage against us to the utmost; will argue, that we believe not our own doctrine, and therefore it deserves no belief; or, we practise not our own precepts, and therefore they cannot be practised? Thus we shall increase that infidelity and wickedness, which our business is to oppose. Too much of it will be really owing to us; and the whole will be laid upon us. The enemies of religion will have the best pretence in the world to ruin us; and the friends of it will grow unconcerned for us, and ready to give us up to them. But, were these consequences not to follow, still very bad ones must follow. Men, irreligious or vicious themselves, cannot be hearty in opposing irreligion and vice; they cannot do it with boldness, if they were hearty; and could they be ever so bold, it must sit much too ill upon them, to have any good effect. Wrong-minded persons will be furnished with the most plausible excuse imaginable for disregarding them intirely; and the rightest-minded persons that ever were, cannot, if they would, regard them as they ought. This will be the case, even with respect to their public teaching: and as for private admonitions, they will seldom have the face to venture upon them, and never succeed in them; whereas every word, that comes from an exemplary man, hath great weight; and his bare example is most valuable instruction of itself. But, were a bad life not to hinder at all the success of our ministry; yet we must remember, it will absolutely hinder the salvation of our souls: and subject us to that *forer punishment, of which he may well be thought worthy, who, teaching others, teacheth not himself, but, through breaking the law, dishonoureth God* *.

Nor is it sufficient by any means for us to be guilty of no vice. This is small praise, for one of our order. We are bound to be patterns of the most diligent practice of virtue, and the strictest regard to religion: and we shall never make others zealous for what we ourselves appear indifferent about. It is very true, that, peculiarly in our case, the generality of the world both expect and find fault, quite beyond reason;

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* Heb. x. 29. Rom. ii. 21, 23.

and doubtless they are much to blame in doing so. But then surely we are no less to blame, if, when we know the severity, with which our conduct will be examined, we do not watch over it with equal severity ourselves; and take the only way to be looked on as good men, that is, being such undeniably. And whoever hath a due sense of this obligation, will conscientiously *abstain*, not only *from all evil*, but *all appearance* of it too*. Such a one, for instance, far from offending against temperance, will be noted for it; and think the imputation of being *mighty to drink wine*† almost as infamous as that of being overcome by it. Far from being remarkable for luxury and delicacy in his manner of living or appearing, he will be sure to preserve himself, on all occasions, at least as remote from indulgence as he is from austerity. And though he will never disgust the persons, with whom he converses, by a gravity affected or ill-timed: yet he will be equally careful, never to expose himself, by a lightness of carriage unbecoming his function; nor let any thing be a part of his character, much less a distinguishing part, that can only tend to lower it. For we can never be useful, if we are despised; and we shall be despised, if we will give opportunities for it. Even they, who seem well pleased with us, will think meanly of us inwardly; and perhaps of the whole order, for our sakes.

Yet, at the same time, we may be greatly mistaken, if we aim to avoid contempt by haughtiness: which will only add hatred to it. Our rule therefore must be, to express, in every thing, condescension to the lower part of the world, without being improperly familiar; and respect to the upper, without being servile: recommending ourselves at once to the love and esteem of both, by a mild kind of dignity and ingenuous simplicity, kept up through our whole behaviour. Mildness of temper is the duty of every man: but especially required of us‡; and absolutely necessary, both to our preserving regard, and doing service in the world. Therefore, whatever provocations we meet with from those, amongst whom we live, as indeed we often meet with great ones, it neither belongs to our character, nor will be for our interest, to take offence

* 1 Thess. v. 22.

† Isa. v. 22.

‡ Mat. x. 16. 1 Tim. iii. 3.

2 Tim. ii. 24.

offence and express resentment; but by prudence and patience to *overcome evil with good* *. For we shall often do it this way, and never any other. Instead of being engaged in enmities of our own, it should be our endeavour to compose the differences of other persons; not by intermeddling in their affairs, when we are not called to it; but by laying hold on every fit opportunity given us, for disposing them to a mutual good opinion, where there is room for it; or at least, to mutual good-will. Too many occasions indeed for friendly interposition, our unhappy party-disputes furnish us with, had we no other. Entering into these with vehemence, and that injustice which never fails to accompany vehemence, is what all men should avoid; but we, who must caution them against it, should avoid it with uncommon care; should religiously pay that respect to every one, which is their due, especially to our superiors; think well of mens actions and designs, unless we have evident cause to think otherwise; judge with modesty, where perhaps we are not qualified to judge; and whatever our opinion be, preserve our behaviour inoffensive; give the least provocation, that may be, to bad men of any side; and act in such manner, as may gain us, if possible, the united esteem of good men of all sides. For theirs is the friendship of which we ought to be ambitious. Familiarities with profane and vicious persons, beyond what necessary civility, or a real prospect of reforming them requires, will, whatever we may promise ourselves from their favour or interest, always discredit and weaken us in general; and much oftner prove hurtful, than advantageous, to any of us in particular. But to cultivate the good opinion of the wise and virtuous, to recommend ourselves to their protection, and, whatever else they may differ about, engage their common zeal in the common cause of religion; this will procure us both security and honour, and every way promote the great design of our profession.

Another point, on which our character will not a little depend, is our being, in a reasonable degree, disinterested. A very large proportion indeed of the clergy have too much cause to endeavour at bettering their circumstances; and it is barbarous treatment, to accuse them for it, instead of pitying

* Rom. xii. 21.

ing them. But over-great solicitude and contrivance for advancing ourselves will always make impressions to our prejudice, let our condition be ever so low: though deservedly much stronger impressions, in proportion as it is higher. We shall be thought to have no attention, but that of which we discover too much: and the truth is, *we cannot serve two masters* *. Nor will it be sufficient, that we avoid the charge of immoderately desiring more; unless we avoid also that of selfishness, in the management of what we have already; a matter, in which it is very difficult, and yet very important, to give no offence. We are bound, both to those who belong to us, and those who shall come after us, to take a proper care of our legal dues; and preserve them faithfully from the encroachments of such, as tell us very truly, that we ought not to be worldly-minded; but forget, what is equally true, that they themselves ought not to be so. But then the strongest reasons of all kinds oblige us, never to make unjust or litigious claims; never to do any thing, either hard and rigorous, or mean and sordid: to show, that we desire always the most easy and amicable method of ending disputes; and whatever method we may be forced to take, never to let any thing force us into the least degree of unfairness, passion, or ill-will; but endeavour, by all instances of friendly behaviour, to win, if possible, upon the person we have to do with; at least to convince every body else, how very far we are from intending wrong to him, or any one.

And nothing will contribute more, to acquit us from the suspicion of being selfish in our dealings with other persons, than approving ourselves charitable to the poor: a virtue which becomes us so extremely, and is so peculiarly expected from us, and will give us so valuable an influence; that we should willingly straiten ourselves in almost any thing besides, that to the full proportion of our abilities, we may abound in giving alms. And together with this, would we but, each in his station, take the best care we can to see justice done them in that provision, which the law hath intended for them, it would generally prove a much more considerable benefaction, than all that we are able to bestow on them of our own.

To

* Matth. vi. 24.

To the above-mentioned instances of right conduct we must always add, what will render them very engaging, the occasional kind offices of good neighbourhood; with a decent hospitality also, if our circumstances will permit it; and then, notwithstanding the censures of those, who complain that we are of little use, and endeavour to make us of none; we may surely well hope to do service to God, and be esteemed of men; especially if, together with so exemplary a behaviour towards others, we are friendly and compassionate, candid and equitable amongst ourselves.

Great injustice, I am satisfied, is done us on this head; and many groundless accusations brought confidently against us, by persons, who neither enquire into facts, nor consider circumstances. But there are few things, in which it concerns us more, to clear ourselves where we are faulty. For so long as we are thought in the world, either insolent to our inferior brethren in general, or void of generosity and pity to such of them as we employ; we must not expect to receive better treatment, than we are understood to give. And if we are believed to be chargeable, beyond other men, with mutual bitterness and vehemence, when any kind of controversy rises amongst us; this too is a character, so very different from that which ought to be ours, that the utmost care should be taken to guard against it. Not that we are obliged, either to speak of or behave to men of bad lives, or bad principles, as if they were good ones, because unhappily they belong to our order. Making no distinction would be on all accounts wrong; and making a proper distinction will be very useful. But then we should never think worse of our brethren, than evidence forces us; never publish our ill opinion, without sufficient reason; nor exceed, when we do publish it, the bounds of moderation: we should be ready to show them all fitting kindness, even whilst they continue blameable; and receive them back with the most charitable tenderness, when they return to their duty. For there is no manner of need, that we should give either so much advantage or so much pleasure to the adversaries of religion, as to let them see those, who should be the joint-defenders of it, engaged in domestic wars: and bringing such charges, and raising such prejudices, one against another, that it is hard to say, whether believing or disbelieving our mutual accusations will make the world think worse of

of us. Our blessed Lord therefore, after reminding his disciples, that *they were the salt of the earth*; were designed, by the purity of their doctrine and example, to keep others from corruption; and after giving them that prophetic warning, which we shall find men zealous to fulfil, that *if the salt have lost its savour, it shall be cast out and trodden under foot**; resuming the same figure at another time, concludes his exhortation thus, *Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another*†.

To these things, brethren, if we have any concern for the interests of religion, or our own, we must always industriously attend; but especially in such times, as by no means admit of negligence or mismanagement. Yet vain will our best endeavours be, unless we constantly add to them our fervent prayers, that God would enable and strengthen, both us, and all that serve him in the gospel of his Son, to perform our duty with faithfulness and success. For *we are not sufficient to think any thing of ourselves: our sufficiency is of God*‡. What therefore we ought, every one of us, to beg of him at all times, let us all at present jointly address to him for, in the comprehensive and expressive words of our public service.

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified; receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before thee for all estates of men in thy holy church; that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen ||.

* Matth. v. 13.

† Mark ix. 50.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

|| Second Collect for Good Friday.

A
C H A R G E
DELIVERED TO THE
CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE
O F
O X F O R D.

In the Year 1741.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

WHEN I had first the pleasure of meeting you, being very much a stranger; I could only lay before you such general admonitions as appeared to be seasonable in this unhappy age of irreligion and libertinism. But having now obtained a fuller acquaintance with things, chiefly from your answers to my printed enquiries, which have given me many reasons to esteem and respect you; I shall at present descend into some farther particulars: and, considering you, not merely as ministers of the gospel at large, but as ministers of the several parishes in which you officiate; remind you of some plain directions for your doing it more successfully; which I shall deliver with less diffidence, and you will receive with greater regard, for their being chiefly such as have been often recommended with good effect on such occasions as this.

I begin with one of the lowest in appearance, but not the
VOL. IV. L least

least important ecclesiastical employments: Catechizing the children under your care.

The catechism consists of the fundamental articles of Christian faith and practice. Without learning these we know not so much as what it is we profess to be; and there is great danger that unless persons learn them at first, they will never learn them thoroughly; but only pick up from what they hear or read, unconnected and sometimes ill grounded notions, that will never unite into a complete or a consistent form of sound doctrine; as I apprehend we have had too much experience. The Rubric therefore requires, *that every person learn the catechism before his confirmation*: and the 59th Canon, *that every incumbent shall examine and instruct the young and ignorant of his parish in it for half an hour or more every Sunday*. Every second Sunday had been appointed before; but that I suppose was judged afterwards insufficient. Not that a strict observation of this rule was probably expected, during the winter season, in the generality of country parishes, or where the children being few were more easily taught. But plainly it was intended, that how much time soever was needful to do this work well, should be faithfully employed in it. I thank God, there are very few places in this Diocese, and I hope there will soon be none, where catechizing is omitted. But I observe, that in many it is practised only during Lent. Now I should apprehend that the summer season would in general be much more convenient, both for the minister and the congregation. But at least the space of a few weeks is by no means sufficient to fix the knowledge of their Christian duty so firmly in the minds of young people, but that in the many months which pass from the end of one Lent to the beginning of another, a great part of it will be to learn again. Therefore whenever this exercise is begun, it should be continued much longer; and whenever the constant repetition of it is left off, it should be occasionally resumed for a Sunday or two, at proper distances of time.

Another defect in some places is, that barely the words of the catechism are taught without any exposition. Now the very plainest expressions in it will need to be varied into others that are equivalent: else children will too often learn nothing but the sound; and unless this danger, which is a very great one, be guarded against, you will have spent both
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their pains and your own to but small purpose. Besides, all sciences have their terms, which must be interpreted to beginners; and some of those in the catechism are figurative ones; very prudently used, as they comprehend in a little compass much meaning, and lead to the understanding of the same figures in scripture; but undoubtedly used on purpose to be explained; without which they are liable to make either no impression, or a wrong one. And farther still, a system so long as to be learned by heart, must have need, were it ever so clear, to be enlarged on; the proofs of its truth, the connections and tendency of its doctrines, the use and extent of its precepts to be shown; and therefore since the canon with great reason enjoins, not only that you examine, but instruct the children in their catechism, I hope you will think this a very needful part of that instruction. As to the manner of it, that may be different, not only in different places, but in the same at different times. Sometimes a continued discourse of some length may be requisite; as it will lay before the adult part of your parishioners a methodical summary of Christian doctrine; which they often want very much for themselves, and will thus be enabled to teach something of to their children, after they have heard it together from you.

Sometimes a cursory exposition of the more difficult expressions may deserve the preference. But asking the children questions, relating to each part, and procuring them to learn texts of scripture confirming each, will be always beneficial. The words of the catechism itself may be very usefully broken into short questions and answers: to which others may be added out of any one of the many good expositions that have been made public. Only you should endeavour as soon and as much as you can to make this a trial and improvement of the understanding as well as the memory of young people, by asking such things as they should reply to in words of their own; making that easy to them in every possible way. And indeed, if many of your questions were formed to be answered merely by affirming or denying, it would be a very good method: and there is an exposition drawn up in that manner.

I am sensible that some clergymen are unhappily obliged to serve two churches the same afternoon; who may therefore

plead, that they have scarce ever time to hear the children repeat their catechism, much less to explain it to them. And God forbid that any needless addition should ever be made to their burthen. But as I am sure they will be desirous of doing what they are able, in a matter of this importance, so I should hope, that in the longer days, at each of their churches alternately, they might hear the catechism repeated one Sunday, and expound part of it another, or hear only part of it repeated, and expound that, or find some way to prevent the intire omission of so necessary a duty. And if these can do any thing of this kind, there is no doubt but others may easily do more.

But a farther hindrance which I fear you complain of too justly is, that parents and masters are negligent in sending their children and servants; and the latter especially are both unwilling and often ashamed to come. Now the Canon doth indeed make provision for punishing such. But persuading them would be much happier. And surely in so clear a case, well timed and well judged arguments, if persisted in, must do a great deal. The example of their equals or their betters, if you have any under your care that are wise enough to set a good one; or however, that of your own families may help very much; and such little rewards of good books, or other encouragements as you can give or procure for them, it may be hoped, will completely prevail with them. At least such as think they are either too old or too considerable to say the catechism themselves, may be greatly improved by hearing others repeat, and you explain it.

But in some few places it is pleaded, that the children cannot read, and their parents either cannot or will not get them taught, and therefore the foundation for their learning the catechism is wanting. But surely some person might be found, within a moderate distance from every place, to whom parents might be induced, at least if something were contributed towards it, to send their children to be instructed thus far. Or, at the worst, they who cannot read might easily by degrees learn so much as the catechism by heart: especially as the three main parts of it are in every Sunday's prayers. The incapacity of reading was almost general at the time of the Reformation; yet even in those days the clergy, were able to
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teach first parents and householders, then by their means children and servants, the Lord's prayer, the creed, and the ten commandments; and afterwards the rest of the catechism. Now, since that gross darkness hath been so far enlightened, it cannot be impracticable to dispel the remains of it.

After due instruction follows confirmation: an appointment derived down from apostolical practice; and of such acknowledged usefulness, that in the times of confusion, a hundred years ago, when bishops were rejected, some of their adversaries took upon them to perform this part of their function; and within these few years the church of Geneva hath restored it in the best manner their form of church-government will admit, and added an office for it to their liturgy. In our own church the ancient esteem of this institution is, generally speaking, so well preserved, that I hope the desire of being confirmed may not a little strengthen that of being instructed, as the only way to it. And yet I must observe, that the numbers from some parishes have been in proportion very small. This may not have arisen from any neglect in the minister; but as it ought to incline me to make the opportunities of confirmation as convenient as I am able; so it ought to incline you, agreeably to the nature of your function, and the express direction of the 61st Canon, to use your best endeavours, that your parishioners may gladly take those opportunities. Yet I must entreat you to endeavour, at the same time, that none be brought, but those who, to speak in the language of the Rubric, *are come to years of discretion*, who have learned, not the words only, but, in a competent degree, the meaning of what was promised for them in baptism; who can say with seriousness and truth, (what surely else they ought not to say at all,) that *in the presence of God and the congregation they ratify and confirm the same in their own persons*; and who therefore are likely to have useful and lasting impressions made on them by this solemnity. Undoubtedly some arrive at this capacity sooner than others, and therefore I have mentioned the age of fourteen, not with a design of absolutely tying you down to it; but as being, for the most part, full early enough; and that, where you see it requisite, you may, without giving offence yourselves, oppose my order to the indiscreet forwardness of parents; whom however, I hope, it will

will make easy, to assure them, as I give you authority, that so long as it pleases God to continue my health and strength, confirmations shall be frequent in every part of this Diocese. I must also desire that you will carefully instruct those whom you do bring, in the whole nature of the institution, and particularly in this, amongst other more important points, that they are never to be confirmed any more than baptized a second time: that you will direct them to make the proper answers audibly through the whole of the office, which many of them seem to have no notion of, though it is so necessary in the nature of the thing, and tends so much both to fix their attention, and to give the solemnity a decent and edifying appearance. You will caution them likewise not to crowd forward and incommode each other, using this argument for one, that the whole number who come in at the same time, will be dismissed at the same time also; and lastly, you will press it strongly upon their minds, that what they promise at their confirmation, they are to remember and keep to their lives end. I have already desired of you, on these occasions, a list of such as you judge qualified; that so the numbers and persons may be known; of this you would do well to keep a copy yourselves, and if it were written alphabetically, both you and I should be able to consult it upon the spot more easily. For the above-mentioned Canon, the 61st, plainly directs your attendance along with your parishioners; to take especial care (for so the words run) *that none be presented but such as you know are fit*. And as your being present to approve or disapprove must needs increase your influence and authority amongst your people; it must likewise make the discharge of my duty so very much easier and more useful, that I beg you will never let me be without your assistance in this work, as you shall never be without mine in any thing. And for this purpose, when confirmations are on a Sunday, which is the time I shall usually pitch upon, for the convenience of the people, excepting at the places of my visitation, you may omit for that day the morning or the evening prayers as you see occasion. I have not, indeed, hitherto been able to effect, what would greatly shorten your labour, calling up your several parishes in their order separately. But I shall be very glad to do it, as soon as ever you can introduce this order amongst them, which I earnestly recommend to you: and I hope a con-
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tinued frequency of confirmations will soon make that feasible without difficulty here, which is now practised constantly in the populous cities of London and Westminster.

From confirmation, persons ought to be led on, if possible, before the impressions of it are much weakened, to the holy sacrament: and it is one material reason why confirmation should not be too early, that with a little farther instruction given soon after it, you may easily bring them, such as they ought to be, to the Lord's table: which may prove a much harder matter, when once they have been a good while out of your hands. The small proportion of communicants which I find there is in most of your congregations, and very small in some, must undoubtedly (as this ordinance is appointed for all Christians, and for a standing means of grace to all) be a subject of very great concern to you. And though it is too true, that the generality of the world, and perhaps the lower sort beyond others, are incredibly obstinate in their prejudices, especially in such as at all favour corrupt nature: yet our complaining of these prejudices is not enough; but labouring to overcome them is our business; and we are not to grow weary of it. Some imagine that the sacrament belongs only to persons of advanced years, or great leisure, or high attainments in religion, and is a very dangerous thing for common persons to venture upon. Some again disregard it stupidly, because others, they say, who do receive are never the better for it; or because their friends before them, or their neighbours about them never received at all, or not till such an age; and why should they? You will therefore represent to them, that whoever receives without benefit, it is his own fault; and that how many soever omit it, either for part of their lives or the whole, not their example, but the word of God is the rule for Christians: that far from being a terrible or ensnaring institution, it is in reality a most gracious one: designed to be celebrated with humility indeed, but with comfort and joy: that all the preparation it requires is within the reach of the plainest head and the most laborious hand, provided there be only an honest and pious heart; and that the judgment which unworthy receivers eat and drink to themselves, needs no more affright those whom God in his mercy will consider as worthy; as he certainly will every true penitent; than the capital punishments, threatened by
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the law to crimes, make innocent persons uneasy; that he whose life unfits him for the sacrament, is unfit for the kingdom of heaven also; and he, who being qualified for it, neglects it, neglects a dying command of his Lord and Saviour, intended for the greatest good to him. But your public instructions on this head will be much more effectual for being followed by seasonable private applications: in which you will hear and answer their objections, be they of ever so little weight, with great meekness; not be provoked by any perverseness of theirs to show anger, but only a friendly concern; and even if you meet with an absolute repulse, leave them with an assurance that you shall apply to them again, in hopes that God will have disposed them better to obey his precepts.

But besides increasing the number of your communicants, it were very desirable, that they who do communicate should do it more frequently. In the three first centuries the eucharist was every where celebrated weekly, and in many places almost daily. Decay of piety occasioned an injunction in the sixth, that every Christian should receive thrice in the year; which was reduced in the thirteenth, perhaps with a bad intention, to once. Our church requires thrice *at the least*: which evidently implies, that more than thrice is hoped for. And indeed each person will scarce be able to communicate so often unless the communion be administered oftener. But besides, it is appointed to be every Lord's day in Cathedral and Collegiate churches, and part of the office for it is read every Lord's day in every church, for an admonition of what it were to be wished the people could be brought to. This indeed at best must be a work of time; but one thing might be done at present in all your parishes, as, God be thanked, it is in most of them: a sacrament might easily be interposed in that long interval between Whitsuntide and Christmas: and the usual season for it, about the feast of St Michael, (when your people having gathered in the fruits of the earth have some rest from their labours, and must surely feel some gratitude to the giver of all good) is a very proper time. And if afterwards you can advance from a quarterly communion to a monthly one, I make no doubt but you will.

Upon this subject I must observe to you farther, that though in one or two parishes of this Diocese the old custom is retained,

tained, of oblations for the minister, as well as alms for the poor, to both which the sentences appointed to be read are plainly adapted: yet in many parishes there is no offertory at all: tho' it be certainly a practice of primitive antiquity, a most proper admonition and specimen of charity; which I fear the generality of Christians much want to be reminded of; a most seasonable demonstration of our loving our brethren for his sake, who hath loved us; and a thing expressly joined in the Rubric of the communion office. Why therefore should you not attempt to revive it, where it hath been intermitted? Merely presenting to persons an opportunity of giving if they think fit, and only what they think fit, can surely (if the reasons of it be explained to them beforehand) never keep any one away from the sacrament. But then, though all who have not absolutely nothing, ought undoubtedly to contribute their mite; yet no disagreeable notice should ever be taken of any, for giving but little, or not giving at all: and whatever is collected, should be disposed of, so that all persons may know it, with the greatest faithfulness, prudence, and impartiality.

Another part of Divine worship, concerning which I think it needful to speak, is psalmody: a part clearly appointed in scripture, both expressive and productive of devout affections, extremely well fitted to diversify long services, and peculiarly to distinguish the several parts of our own, which were originally separate. Our ecclesiastical laws do not indeed require it under any penalty: because there may not every where be persons qualified to perform it decently. But where-ever there are, the Rubric makes provision for it, and I recommend to you that it be not omitted. You will always endeavour that your Parish Clerks be persons of discretion as well as skill and seriousness. But however, you will be much sorer of no impropriety happening in this part of the worship, if you either direct them every Sunday to suitable psalms, or assign them a course of such to go orderly through. And unless the generality of your parishioners are provided with books and able to make use of them: ordering each line to be read, will both secure a greater number of singers, and be very instructive to many who cannot sing. All persons indeed who are by nature qualified ought to learn, and constantly join to glorify him that made them, in psalms and spiritual songs.

This was the practice of the early Christians ; it was restored very justly at the Reformation ; and hath declined of late, within most of our memories, very unhappily. For the improvements made by a few in church-music, were they real improvements, will seldom equal the harmony of a general chorus ; in which any lesser dissonances are quite lost ; and it is something inexpressibly elevating, to hear the *voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters and of mighty thunders*, to speak in the words of scripture, *making a joyful noise to the God of their salvation, and singing his praises with understanding*. Persons of a ludicrous turn may represent every thing in a wrong light ; but those of any seriousness, if they will lay aside false delicacy, and that preposterous shame of religious performances, with which the present age is so fatally tainted, will find themselves very piously affected only by hearing this melody, much more by bearing a part in it ; and therefore I beg you will encourage all your parishioners, especially the youth, to learn psalmody : and excite them, if there be need, with some little reward ; for you will thus make the service of God abundantly more agreeable, and their attendance on it more constant. But then, where any knowledge of the old common tunes remains, you should endeavour principally, that your learners may perfect themselves in these ; that so they may lead and assist the rest of the congregation, who should always join with them ; or if you must admit a mixture of new and uncommon tunes, it should be no greater than you find yourselves in prudence absolutely obliged to. Else the consequence will be, what I fear many of you have experienced, that either one part of your people will resent being unjustly silenced, and this by the introduction of tunes often not so good as their former ones, and so your parish will be divided and uneasy ; or if they agree to the change ever so generally, and like it ever so well, yet your select singers will either be weary in a while of what only novelty recommended to them, or grow conceited and ungovernable, or die off, or be dispersed, and the congregation will be left unable to sing in any manner at all. Where indeed the newer tunes have quite blotted out the memory of the old ones, all you can do is, to make use of what you find in use, to get some of the easiest of them learnt as generally as you can, and keep to these. And if, in order to instruct your people in either way

way of singing, meetings to practise out of Church-time be requisite, you will keep a strict watch over them, that they be managed with all possible decency, and never continued till candle-light, if they consist of both sexes. You will likewise discountenance, at least, all frequent meetings, between the singers of different parishes, and making appointments to sing alternately at one anothers churches: for this wandering from their own, which by law they ought to keep to, usually leads them into excesses and follies.

I am very sensible, that some of the things which I have been mentioning, are by no means of equal importance with others. But nothing is without its importance, that relates to Divine worship. The mere outward behaviour of those who attend upon it is of such use, and good influence, that I must desire you will be diligent in teaching them, (but so as to persuade, not provoke them) what reverence belongs to the house of God: particularly how very wrong it is to sit instead of kneeling when they are or should be addressing themselves to their Maker, and to show how indecent that appearance is of disregard to him, which they would not use on any account to one of their fellow-creatures a little superior to themselves. If you could only breed up the younger to a right behaviour in this respect, your congregations would grow regular in time. But mild expostulations will surely in so plain a case produce some effect upon the rest also, which will be much facilitated if you take care that proper conveniences for kneeling be provided for them. And if you could convince them also that standing is a more reverent posture to sing psalms to God in, as well as to read them, than sitting, you would come so much the nearer to the apostolical rule *of doing all things decently*. For as some of the psalms contain the noblest acts of adoration, surely they ought not to be sung in a posture unfit to express it. Another thing, and no small one, which I believe many of your parishioners often want to be admonished of, is to come before the service begins. Undoubtedly allowance is to be made for necessary, especially unforeseen, business, and some allowance for not knowing the time exactly; but I hope you will obviate both these pleas as far as you can, by consulting their convenience in the hour you fix, and then keeping punctually to it. And at the same time you will remind them, that a due degree of zeal

in religion would incline them to be rather a great deal too early at the house of God, than a little too late: that no part of the service can be more needful for them, than that which comes first; the confession of their sins: that instruction in their duty is better learnt from the psalms and lessons, which are the word of God, than from sermons, which are only our explanations of it; and that by coming so irregularly, they not only are great losers themselves, but disturb and offend others.

But it is not sufficient to give you directions about such as do come to church, without taking notice of the great numbers which I find there are in many, if not most of your parishes, that omit coming. Now on these your preaching indeed can have no immediate influence. But it may however prevent the increase of them; and furnish others with arguments against them; and with the best of arguments, their experience of its good effects. You will therefore questionless do all you can this way, without using any expressions in relation to their fault, which, if repeated to them, may exasperate them. But your chief dependance must be on private application to them, varied suitably to the occasion of their neglect. If it arises merely from ignorance, or sloth, or want of thought, they must be plainly told what they owe to their Maker, and awakened to the hopes and fears of a future life. If it be desire of gain or of pleasure that keeps them away, they must be asked what it will *profit them to gain the whole world and lose their own souls?* or shown, that to be lovers of *pleasure more than of God* will end in pains eternal. If they defend themselves, by pleading, as some will, that nothing can be told them at church, but what they are acquainted with already, it will surely not be hard to show them that they over-rate their knowledge: that if this were otherwise, they might however be reminded of what they did not think of, or excited to what they did not practise: that, were they too perfect to receive any benefit, it would not be decent for them to tell the world so by their behaviour: that at least they ought to set others an example, who may be the better for public instruction: and lastly, that receiving instruction is not the whole of divine service, but praying the chief part. And though it is allowed they can pray at home privately, yet without enquiring whether they do, since God hath com-
manded

manded, for plain and important reasons, that we worship him publicly, and hath excepted no one; by what authority doth any one except himself? And what will this end in, but an universal neglect of a duty which our Maker hath required to be universally practised? If it be any scruple about the lawfulness of coming to church that keeps persons away, fit opportunities should be sought with great care, and used with great prudence, to set them right: and such dissenters, for many there are, as do not think our manner of worship sinful, but only prefer another, which perhaps they are often without the means of attending upon, should be seriously entreated to consider, how they can justify separating from a lawful communion appointed by lawful authority, and even omitting all public worship frequently, rather than worship with us. But then, with which soever of these persons we discourse, not the least personal anger must be shewn: nothing but a concern about their future happiness. For, by this means, if we make them no better, we shall at least make them no worse, and perhaps may leave in their hearts what will some time or other work there. Persons who profess themselves not to be of our church, if persuasions will not avail, must be let alone. But other absenters, after due patience, must be told in the last place, that unwilling as you are, it will be your duty to present them, unless they reform: and if, when this warning hath been repeated, and full time allowed for it to work, they still persist in their obstinacy, I beg you to do it. For this will tend much to prevent the contagion from spreading, of which there is else great danger: and when once you have got them, though it be against their inclinations, within reach of your pulpit, who knows what good may follow? Different cases may indeed require difference of treatment: and both the same severity and the same mildness that will subdue one, will harden another. You will therefore act yourselves, and advise your Church-wardens to act in this matter, according to your discretion. And after a prosecution is begun, it shall still depend on your opinion whether it shall be carried on with rigour, or suspended a while in hopes of amendment. Only one caution I would give you: Let not any person's threatenings, that, if he is prosecuted he will go over to the Dissenters, move you in the least. Such will seldom do what they threaten: or, if they do, 'tis better they should serve
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God in any way than none ; and much better they should be a disgrace to them than to us. I must not conclude this head without desiring you to remind your people, that our Liturgy consists not only of morning, but evening prayer also ; that the latter is in proportion equally edifying and instructive with the former ; and so short, that, generally speaking, there can arise no inconvenience from attending upon it, provided persons are within any tolerable distance from the church ; that few of them have business at that time of the day ; and amusements ought surely never to be preferred on the Lord's day before religion ; not to say that there is room for both.

But besides the public service, your people should be admonished to spend a due part of their Sabbath in private exercises of piety. For this is almost the only time that the far greater part of them have, for meditating on what they have already heard at church ; for reading the scripture and other good books ; for the serious consideration of their ways ; or giving such instruction to their children and families, as will make your work both easier and more effectual. And therefore, though one would not by any means make their day of rest wearisome, nor forbid cheerfulness, and even innocent festivity upon it, much less the expressions of neighbourly civility and good-will, which are indeed a valuable part of the gracious ends of the institution ; yet employing a reasonable share of it seriously at home as well as at church, and preserving an especial reverence of God, even throughout the freer hours of it, is necessary to make it a blessing to them in reality, instead of a season of leisure to ruin themselves, as it proves too often.

But farther, besides your and their duty on the Lord's day, it is appointed, that all ministers of parishes read prayers on holidays, on Wednesdays, and Fridays : and undoubtedly your endeavours to procure a congregation at such times ought not to be wanting. Were I to repeat to you the strong expressions which my great predecessor Bishop Fell used, in requiring this part of ecclesiastical duty, they would surprize you. But I content myself with saying, that public worship was from the very first ages constantly performed on the two stationary days of each week ; that all holidays appointed by
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the church were carefully observed by the clergy, and the number of them now is not burthenfome: that where you can get a competent number to attend at these times, you will act a very pious and useful, as well as regular part: that your own houses will sometimes furnish a small congregation; and what success you may have with others, nothing but trials, repeated from time to time, can inform you. But they, whose parishioners are the fewest and the busiest of all, I hope do not fail of bringing them to church, at the least on Good-Friday, and Christmas-day, besides Sundays. For though in some of your answers to my enquiries, these are not mentioned as prayer-days, yet I presume that this arose from your taking it for granted I should understand they were. But if in any place they be not, I earnestly entreat they may: for at such times there can be no difficulty of getting a congregation. I hope likewise, that you are not wanting in due regard to those which are usually called State Holidays: and particularly, that of the public fast, which hath been appointed these two last years, (as we have but too much reason to apprehend there will be need) I beg you will endeavour, not only to bring your parishioners to church on that occasion, but move them to such inward humiliation for their own sins, and such fervency of prayer for this most corrupt and wicked nation, as may avert, if it be possible, the just judgments of God which so violently threaten us.

You must have understood, Brethren, in all you have heard, that I am not exhorting you to promote in your parishes a mere form of godliness without the power. Outward observances, by whatever authority appointed, are only valuable in proportion as they proceed from a good heart, and become means of edification and grace. They are always to be reverently regarded, but never rested in; for persons may observe without the least benefit, what they cannot omit without great sin. The business of your parishioners therefore is, so to use the external part of religion, as to be inwardly improved by it in love to God and their fellow-creatures, and in moral self-government; and your business is, to apply both your public and private diligence, that this happy end be effectually attained. You have under your care great numbers of poor creatures, living very laborious lives in this world, and de-
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pending almost entirely on you for their hopes of another. It is a noble employment to direct their behaviour and lighten their toils here, by precepts and motives which lead them on at the same time to happiness hereafter. You will be sure of their acknowledgments at least in proportion as you succeed in this work; but you will be rewarded by God in proportion as you endeavour it. Think not therefore, that I am laying burthens on you, but only *stirring up your minds by way of remembrance*, and exhorting you so to watch for the souls of men, as they *that must give account, that you may do it with joy and not with grief*. It is very little in my power either to increase or lessen your duty. Our blessed Master hath fixed it: you have undertaken it: and were I to release you from ever so great a part of it, I should only bring guilt on myself, without acquitting you at all. The injunctions of the New Testament, infinitely stricter than any of men, would continue to bind you as firmly as ever. *Take heed therefore to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfil it.*

Having a subject of such a nature to speak to you upon, and being able to speak to you in a body but once in three years, you must not wonder if I go somewhat beyond the bounds of a common discourse. There are many other things, and very material ones, relating to you as parish-ministers, which I could have wished to mention now: but I was willing to treat first of such matters as belong more immediately to the worship of God. If it please him that I live to another visitation, I shall in that proceed to the rest. Permit me now to add but one word or two more upon a different subject, and I have done.

Whilst we are serving Christianity here, with the advantage of a legal establishment and maintenance, there are vast multitudes of our fellow-subjects in America, their negro-slaves, and the neighbouring Indians, amongst whom the knowledge of God is taught, and the exercises of his worship supported, if at all, very imperfectly, and with great difficulty, by the society for propagating the gospel: the income of which depends entirely on the voluntary contributions of good Christians; and is now reduced so low, and burthened with such a debt, that they find it necessary to propose, this
next

next year, according to the powers of their charter, and with his Majesty's recommendatory letters; a general collection, which they have not had for above twenty years past, to enable them to go on. Application will probably not be made to every parish separately. But I hope every minister will give this excellent design all the assistance in his power; such as can afford it, either by becoming stated contributors and members of the society, or at least by some occasional benefaction in this time of need; and all, by recommending the cause to such of their people or acquaintance as they have reason to think will pay regard to it. If any person desires a more particular acquaintance with the nature and usefulness, and present condition of this undertaking, I have given some account of these matters in a sermon at their anniversary meeting, lately published by me, and shall be ready to give any of you farther information, who shall either now or hereafter apply to me for it, personally or by letter.

But I must not yet conclude, without mentioning also the society for promoting Christian knowledge; who are carrying on the same good work in the East Indies, which that for propagating the gospel is in the West; and at the same time are promoting the cause of religion many ways here at home: particularly by selling, at very low rates, Bibles, common-prayers, and numbers of other religious books, chiefly of small sizes, for the use of the poor. This they also are supported in by voluntary benefactions: to which whoever is able to contribute, will do a very good work; and whoever can only purchase a few of their books for the use of his parishioners, shall have both my best assistance in it, and my hearty thanks for it.

I do not mean at all, in speaking of these things, to prescribe to you the methods of your charity; but only to lay before you two very deserving ones, which may possibly have escaped the notice of some of you; and to endeavour, that the cause of our Lord and Master may be served in as many ways as it can: for you must be sensible how very great need there is that none be neglected.

By zealously making use of such as are presented to us,

we may possibly be of much more service to 'others than we may expect ; but we shall be sure of doing infinite service to ourselves.!

And may God stir up the wills of all his faithful people, that they, plentifully bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of him be plentifully rewarded, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

* Collect for the 25th Sunday after Trinity.

A CHARGE

A
C H A R G E
DELIVERED TO THE
CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE
O F
O X F O R D.

In the Year 1747.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

I Cannot speak to you thus assembled, without congratulating you in the first place on the happy suppression of that unnatural rebellion, which, since we met last, hath threatened our religion and liberties. Nor will either my duty, or my inclination, suffer me to omit returning you my heartiest thanks, for the unanimous zeal you expressed against it; and, I doubt not, were ready to express, even before the exhortation to do so, which I was directed to send you, and which you received with so obliging a regard. Your behaviour, and that of the whole clergy, on this trying occasion, hath abounded with such proofs of loyalty and affection to the government, under which God's mercy hath placed us, that his Majesty hath declared, he shall ever have the strongest sense of what you have done for the support of his throne, and gladly show his gratitude by any proper methods of extending his Royal favour to you and to religion. It may be hoped also,

that our fellow-subjects will remember, what they owe to our long despised and reproached labours: and learn, how essential a part the Church of England is of our present establishment. Indeed, not only the more candid of those, who thought amiss of us, have acknowledged our merit now; but the *lying lips* are put to silence, which disdainfully and despitefully spoke against us *. And let us go on, brethren, to express the warmest and most prudent zeal for what we doubly felt the value of, when we feared to lose it: and so behave in this and all respects, that *they who are of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us* †. For however imperfectly men may do us justice, our reward from God is sure.

I have recommended to you, in the course of my former visitations, various parts of your duty: First in general, as ministers of the gospel in a vicious and profane age; then more particularly, as incumbents of your respective parishes. Under this latter head, I began with what immediately relates to the worship of God: and now proceed to another point, of a temporal nature indeed, as it may seem, but several ways connected with spirituals; the care you are bound to take of the incomes arising from your benefices. These endowments are sacred to the purposes of piety and charity: and it is neither lawful for us to employ them unsuitably ourselves, nor to let any part of them become a prey to the avarice of others. The few that may appear to be larger than was necessary, are in truth but needful encouragements to the breeding up of youth for holy orders. And were they lessened, either an insufficient number would be destined to that service, or too many of them would be of the lowest rank, unable to bear the expence of acquiring due knowledge, and unlikely to be treated with due regard. Besides, the most plentiful of these revenues may be well applied to religious uses: and therefore, as they have been dedicated, ought to continue appropriated, to them. But the generality of them, it will surely be owned, are small enough; and a very great part of them left so utterly incompetent, by the ravages of former times, that the little which remains, demands our strictest care now. For, without it, poor incumbents will not be able to maintain themselves decently, much less to exercise hospitality.

* Psal. xxxi. 20.

† Tit. ii. 8.



lity and charity towards others. Yet on these things both their spirit and their success in doing their duty greatly depend. And therefore how indifferent soever any of us may have cause to be about our own interests, we ought to consider ourselves as trustees for our successors. We all blame our predecessors, if they have not transmitted the patrimony of the church undiminished into our hands. Let us think then what others hereafter will say of us, and with what reason, if we are guilty of the same fault; and give away for ever, what we should count it sacrilege in any one else to take from us.

Indeed some persons imagine or pretend that the only danger is, of the clergy's encroaching on the properties of the laity, not neglecting their own. And we acknowledge there have been times, when that was the danger. But they are long past; and God forbid we should desire to revive them. Placing excessive wealth in the hands of ecclesiastics, would both endanger others and corrupt them: as the examples of past ages have too fully shewn. But the parochial clergy of those times, instead of being the authors of this error, were the heaviest sufferers by it. And to renew the attempt in these days, would be folly equal to its wickedness: of which we should so certainly and immediately be made sensible, indeed we are so universally sensible of it already, that there can be no need of giving cautions on this head. All we wish for is, the unmolested enjoyment of what clearly belongs to us, and a reasonable allowance of what is confessedly requisite for us, in order to attain the only ends of our institution, the present and future happiness of mankind. In how many and sad instances we fail of possessing in peace such a competent provision, I need not say. Let us all behave under whatever usage we receive, with the innocence and the prudence, which our Master enjoins. But we shall be wanting in both, if we wrong ourselves and those that will come after us, by improper voluntary diminutions of what is allotted for our support: which, through inconsiderateness and indolence, hath been often done; designedly, I would hope, but seldom. And we may be guilty of it, either at coming into our benefices, or during our incumbency on them, or when we quit them: to which three heads I shall speak in their order.

Yet

Yet, indeed, as I am now directing my discourse to persons, most of them already possessed of benefices, it may seem too late to give cautions respecting the time of entering upon them. But all who have acted right then, will at least hear with pleasure their conduct approved. If any have acted wrong, which I do not know that any of you have, on being shown it, they may repent of it, they may consider how far they can undo what they have done, or prevent the bad consequences that are likely to flow from it. And both sorts may be influenced more strongly, to take no improper steps on any future occasion, and to warn their friends against such errors.

I proceed therefore to say, that benefices ought neither to be given, nor accepted, with any other condition or promise, than that of doing our duty in relation to them. This engagement is always understood, whether it be expressed or not; and no other should either be required or complied with. For when bishops, originally the sole patrons, to encourage the endowment of parishes, gave others a right of presenting fit persons to them; or that right was confirmed or granted by the civil power: they must be supposed to give it only to be exercised for the future, as it had been before; when, whoever was appointed to any station in the church, enjoyed the benefit of all he was appointed to, so long as he behaved well. And therefore, attempting to bring the clergy into a worse condition, is usurpation; and submitting to the attempt, is encouraging usurpation.

Yet there is a great difference between the things to which our submission may be demanded. Some are grossly and obviously unlawful. If, for instance, any person, in order to obtain a benefice, promises to give up such a part of the income, to connive at such a lessening of it, to accept of such a composition for it, to allow such a pension or make such a payment to any one out of it: these things are, in effect, the same with laying down beforehand such a sum for it: which is the nearest approach, excepting that of bribing for holy orders, to his sin, who thought the *gifts of God might be purchased with money*, and was answered, *thy money perish with thee**. Nor can it take away, if it alleviate the guilt, that the payment

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* Acts viii. 20.

or pension; thus reserved, is allotted to uses really charitable. Still it is buying what ought to be freely bestowed: this forced charity must disable a man from voluntary almsgiving, in proportion to its amount: and one compliance in a seemingly favourable instance, will only make way for another in a more doubtful case, and so on without end. Another excuse I hope nobody will plead; that obligations of this kind may be safely entered into, since they are notoriously void. For we can never be at liberty to make an agreement, merely because it is so bad a one, that neither law nor conscience will let us keep it.

But supposing a person binds himself to his patron, only that he will quit his benefice when required; even this he ought not to do. For he hath no right to promise it; and no power to perform the promise. Whoever undertakes the care of a living, must continue that care till the law deprives him of it, or his superior releases him from it*. Therefore he can only subject himself to a penalty which another may exact at pleasure, unless he doth what of himself he is not able to do, and knows not whether he shall obtain permission to do. Can this be prudent? Can it be fit? If he pay the penalty, he gives money to the patron, though not for his first possession of the benefice, yet for his continuance in it: besides that, he must either distress himself, or defraud religion and charity of what he ought to have bestowed on them. If then to avoid paying it, he begs leave to resign, he puts his bishop under very unreasonable difficulties; who, by refusing his request, may bring great inconveniences on the poor man: and, by granting it, may loose a minister from a parish, where he was useful, and ought to have continued; may expose himself to the many bad consequences of having an improper successor presented to him. At least he will encourage a practice undoubtedly wrong and hurtful in the main, whatever it may be in the instance before him. And why are not these sufficient grounds for a denial; since whatever the incumbent suffers by it, he hath brought upon himself?

Besides, in bonds to resign, where no condition is expressed, some unfair intention almost always lies hid. For if it were

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* See Stillingfleet on Bonds of Resignation, in the third volume of his works, page 731.

an honest one, why should it not be plainly mentioned, and both sides cleared from imputations? Assuredly, unless persons are to a strange degree inconsiderate, this would be done if it could. The true meaning therefore too commonly is, to enslave the incumbent to the will and pleasure of his patron, whatever it shall happen at any time to be. So that, if he demands his legal dues, if he is not subservient to the schemes, political or whatever they are, which he is required to promote; if he reproves such and such vices; if he preaches, or does not preach, such and such doctrines; if he stands up for charity and justice to any one when he is forbidden: the terror of resignation, or the penalty of the bond, may immediately be shaken over his head. How shamefully beneath the dignity of a clergyman is such a situation as this! How grievously doth it tempt a man to unbecoming, and even unlawful compliances! What suspicions doth it bring upon him, of being unduly influenced when he is not! Or however he may escape himself, what a snare may his example prove to his poor brethren of weaker minds, or less established characters.

To prevent these mischiefs, both the ancient laws of other churches, and those of our own*, still in force, have strictly forbidden such contracts†. Particularly the Council of Oxford, held in 1222, prescribed an oath against Simony, for so it is entitled, by which every clerk shall swear at his institution, that he hath entered into no compact in order to be presented.

* Stillingfleet, in his Letter about Bonds of Resignation in Miscell. discourses, p. 42. &c. shews several sorts of contracts that are allowed, and objects not against trusts and confidences [as indeed I have been assured that Dr Bentley held a living in trust for the Bishop's son] nor against what is done, in consideration of service, without a compact: but only against a legal obligation on the party before his presentation, to perform such a condition; and if he do not, to resign.

† The Council of Westminster 1138, appoints, that when any one receives Investiture from the Bishop, he shall swear that he hath neither given nor promised any thing for his Benefice. Spelm. vol. 2. p. 39. apud Gibson Cod. p. 845.

sented*. And Archbishop Courtney, in his injunctions to all the bishops of his province in 1391, condemns those, as guilty of Simony, who, before presentation, engage to resign when required†; and appoints all persons instituted, to be sworn‡, that they have not given, to obtain presentation, either oath or promise to resign ||. Again, the constitutions of Cardinal Pole, when Archbishop, in 1555, censure, as being simoniacal; all bargains or promises for procuring of benefices; and assert that benefices ought to be given without any condition, and order that the person presented shall swear, he hath neither promised, nor given; nor exchanged, nor lent, nor deposited, nor remitted, &c. any thing, nor confirmed any thing given before§. And a convocation held under him, two years after, complaining that, of late years, persons have procured benefices *et Prælaturas*, [parish priests are *prælati*: see index to Lyndwood in *Prælatus*:] not only vacant, but likely to become so, *non precibus & obsequiis tantum, sed & apertis muneribus*, so that *electionum saluberrimæ formæ quæ per canones, liberæ esse deberent, vel fraudibus obtenebratæ sunt, vel ad compromissi necessitatem redactæ*: directs, that bishops prevent these things, and take care by themselves and their officers, especially *quos in prælatorum electionibus tanquam directores & con-*

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* The words are, *quod propter præsentationem illam non promiserit nec dederit aliquid præsentanti, nec aliquam propter hoc inierit pactiorem*: where *hoc* must naturally refer to *negotium præsentationis* understood.

See Conc. Oxon. C. 18. in Wilkins, vol. 1. p. 588. and Lyndwood, L. 2. de Jurejurando, cap. præsentanti, in Wake's Charge, 1709, p. 34, and Stillingfleet on Bonds, &c. p. 721. and Letter about Bonds, p. 39.

† But it appears, by the preamble, that it was designed only against putting it thus in the patron's power to dispose of the profits, or turn the Incumbents out, and give pluralities of livings to such as he favoured.

‡ Wilkins, vol. 3. p. 216. Wake, p. 35, 36.

|| The injunctions of Ed. 6. in 1547, appoint, that such as buy benefices, or come to them by fraud or deceit, shall be deprived, &c. And such as sell them, or by any colour bestow them for their own gain or profit, shall lose their right of presentment for that time. Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 7, 8.

§ Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 124, 125.

sultores interesse continget, that *fraudes & pactiones* be excluded : and if any one have got, *per pecuniæ & munerum sordes, prælaturam vel beneficium ecclesiasticum*, he be punished *. It is indeed true, that the great evil, at which these several directions were levelled, was giving or promising money for presentations, or receiving it for resignations †. And therefore it may be argued, that where no money is directly paid, or taken, or covenanted for, nothing illegal is done. But the opinions delivered, and the judgments pronounced, by the Canon Lawyers, plainly extend the prohibition to whatever is equivalent to money ‡. And it hath been urged that by how much soever a person lessens the value of a benefice to himself by a bond of resignation to the patron in order to procure it, as unquestionably such a bond doth lessen it, so much in effect he pays to obtain it ||. Or allowing, that in some cases this doth not hold : yet nothing will prevent unlawful contracts in many cases, but prohibiting in all cases absolute contracts to resign upon demand ; which therefore the above-mentioned constitutions have rightly done. And as the oaths, prescribed in them, express the denial of having made such a contract ; the oath prescribed at this time must naturally be understood

* Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 165.

† The tenor of them shows this. Particularly the corrupt resignations were to get pensions out of benefices, or money for quitting them, or exchanges gainful to the patron or his friends. The Ref. Leg. Eccl. Tit. de Renunciacione, cap. 3. forbids only resignations for consideration of gain. See Wake, p. 48. And Tit. de admittendis ad Beneficia Ecclesiastica, c. 24. only obliges a person at institution to swear that he neither hath given nor promised, nor will give, any thing. And Tit. de Beneficiis Conferendis, forbids only compacts by which benefices are lessened. See Wake, p. 36. who goes too far in saying the words are general against all manner of contracts or promises. The preamble of the oath in Can. 40. condemns only *buying and selling* of benefices. The Latin is *nundinatio*. But Stillingfleet saith, p. 719, this takes in any benefit accruing to the patron, because *uomine emptionis & venditionis intelligitur omnis contractus non gratuitus*.

‡ See Wake, p. 18, 24. Stillingfleet, p. 719, 722. and Letter about Bonds, p. 46, &c. The injunctions of Ed. 6. forbid patrons selling livings, or by any colour bestowing them for their own gain and profit. Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 7, 8.

|| Stillingfleet, p. 722.

understood to imply the same thing. For its being less explicit is no proof, that, what in common acceptance came under the name *Simoniacal* before, doth not come under it still.

However, we must acknowledge, that bonds of resignation on demand have been declared by the temporal judges valid, and not *simoniacal* *. And they are indeed the proper judges, whether they are such by the common and statute law. But whether the ecclesiastical law permits them, is not so clearly within their cognizance. Indeed all questions about this crime seem to have been entirely out of it †, till an act was made, 31 Eliz. C. 6. which, *for the avoiding of simony and corruption in presentations and collations*, inflicts penalties on those who shall either give or procure them for any sum of money, profit or benefit; or for any promise, bond, or assurance of it, directly or indirectly: but at the same time allows the ecclesiastical laws to punish the same offences which the act doth, in the same manner as they did before. Now making these provisions is not saying, that nothing shall be deemed *simoniacal* by the spiritual judge, but what the temporal judge shall think

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* Stillingfleet, p. 735, &c. Wake, p. 49, &c. Indeed Stillingfleet, p. 735. says that the Court, having given judgment for such a bond in the case of Jones and Lawrence, 8 Jac. 1. held, seven years after, viz. 15 Jac. 1. in the case of Paschal and Clerk, that it was Simony within the statute; and he cites Noy, 22. for it. But Wake mentions not this: and Watson, c. 5. page 40. says it doth not appear by the roll that there was such a trial; and if there was, it is of no great authority, nor hath been regarded since.

† See Wake, p. 39, 50. The preamble of 5 Eliz. c. 23. compared with § 13. sufficiently intimates that Simony is an offence appertaining merely to the jurisdiction and determination of the ecclesiastical courts and judges. Yet Stillingfleet, p. 718. cites from Croke, car. 361. the judges as saying, in the case of Mackaller and Todderick, that the common law before 31 Eliz. took notice of a *simoniacal* contract. But Coke in Cawdrie's case, 5th rep. fol. 8, 9. as cited by Wake, p. 50. puts Simony among the crimes the consequence whereof belongs not to the common but ecclesiastical law, and repeats the same, p. 40. And Croke, fol. 789. says that the judges in the case of Baker, 42 Eliz. held that it appertains to the spiritual court to determine what is Simony, and not to this court to meddle therewith.

is forbidden by this act *. And therefore, though the latter may apprehend absolute bonds of resignation to be consistent with the statute; yet the former may justly apprehend them to be inconsistent with the constitutions of the church, which we ought to obey; and with the oath against Simony, which ought to be taken in the sense of those who originally enjoined and still administer it; and not to have its meaning changed on the supposed authority of their opinions, who neither have undertaken to interpret it, nor, if the judgment of their predecessors be allowed, have a right to do it.

At least refusing such bonds, on account of the oath, must be the safest side: especially, as the greatest divines of this church have declared against them; and I think none for them. Though indeed, were the oath out of the question; the bonds are apparently so mischievous, as to be for that reason alone sufficiently unlawful. It may be said, that if the patron attempts to make any ill use of them, equity will relieve the incumbent. But I have shown you, that their consequences must be very bad, whatever use the patron makes of them. And besides, how expensive, indeed how uncertain, this pretended relief will be; how seldom therefore it will or can be sought for; and how much better on all accounts it is to avoid the need of it; every one must perceive.

But

* Stillingfleet, p. 718. saith "the words Simony or Simoniacal contract are never mentioned in this Statute." And Wake, p. 50. cites Noy rep. fol. 25. as saying, that "in it there is no word of Simony; because by that means the common law would have been judge what should have been Simony, and what not." And Stillingfleet, *ibid.* allows, that, if the word had been there, the judges would have had sufficient reason to declare what was Simony and what not. Now in truth that part of the Act which relates to the present affair begins thus: "And for the avoiding of Simony and corruption in presentations, collations, and donations of and to benefices, &c. and in admissions, institutions, and inductions to the same, be it further enacted, that, if any person, &c." This may seem to imply that no other things but those mentioned afterwards were Simony: otherwise the act would provide only for avoiding some sorts of Simony. Accordingly Gibson Cod. p. 839. and Stillingfleet, *pref.* p. 714. and *disc.* p. 718. think it only means to punish some particular remarkable sorts specified in it; and Wake agrees that it abrogates no ecclesiastical law. And this agrees with what is observed here, note p. 106. But still the judges, after this act, thought that judging of Simony did not belong to them. See here, note p. 107.

But let us now suppose, that a seemingly reasonable condition were expressed in these bonds : for instance, to resign when such a relation or friend of the patron's comes to the age of being presented, who perhaps hath been educated with a view to the benefice vacant *. Now I do not say but a person may very lawfully, and sometimes very charitably, form an intention of resigning at such a period, if circumstances then should make it proper ; and may also signify such intention beforehand. But if he bind himself to it absolutely, besides the distrust of him, which requiring this implies, perhaps when the time comes, the young person will refuse to take the benefice, or the patron to give it him ; and yet the incumbent must continue in perfect dependance thenceforward ; for his case is become the same, as if his bond had been originally without any condition. Besides, this contrivance for procuring an immediate vacancy at such a particular time, encourages persons, even of low rank, to purchase patronages, separate from the manors on which they were anciently appendant, merely to serve interested purposes. And the generality of these, instead of considering their right of presentation as a spiritual trust, to be conscientiously discharged, will of course look on it as a temporal inheritance, which, since they have bought, they may fairly sell, at any time, in any manner, for what they can ; or at best, merely as the means of providing a maintenance for such persons as they please ; who therefore, unless they will be cast off intirely by their friends, must, when they

* Stillingfleet, p. 716. supposes this to be the intent, with which an absolute bond is required ; and saith, it is a case, wherein a bond may be thought far more reasonable than in others. But he expresses no positive approbation of it ; nor doth he mention there giving a bond with this condition expressed. But, in p. 736. he hath that case in view, where he saith, " that there may be a lawful trust in such a case, I do not question ;" yet adds, " but whether the person who takes this trust can enter into a bond " and take the oath, I very much question." And Wake, though in p. 22. he names this as one of the most favourable cases that can be desired, condemns it notwithstanding ; as an obligation, which the patron has no right to impose, nor the clerk any power to enter into ; as contrary to the canons, and the authority of the bishop, and the oath of yielding him canonical obedience, and of doing what in the clerk lies to maintain the rights of his See ; but he doth not say it is contrary to the oath against Simony.

they are of age, however unfit for the cure of souls, however averse from it, submit to be presented, and perhaps cannot be rejected. Then further, in proportion as this custom prevails, benefices, and particularly the more valuable ones, coming to be of a temporary and precarious tenure, contrary to what they were intended; persons of character and abilities, and a proper spirit, will not so often care to take them. Or if they do, they will not usually, indeed it cannot so well be expected they should, either defend the rights of them, or exercise hospitality and charity upon them, in the same manner as if they were to hold them for life. Nor will the people, generally speaking, respect those who come in thus, and must behave, and go out again thus, as they ought always to respect their ministers.

But still persons may plead that whatever is objected against other engagements from incumbents to patrons, yet if they engage only to be constantly resident, to do faithfully the whole duty, which the laws of the church enjoin them, or perhaps somewhat more; this must be allowable. And doubtless it is, provided the engagement be only a sincere promise of acting thus, as far as they can with reasonable convenience. Nay, if they bind themselves by a legal tie, to do any thing, which either belongs of course to their benefice, or hath by ancient custom been annexed to it, learned and judicious authors justify them*. But covenanting thus to do even a laudable action, as teaching school, or prescribing to the sick, if their predecessors were not, without a covenant, obliged to it, hath been held unlawful and simoniacal†: because it is promising to save, which upon the matter is promising to give, so much money either to the patron, or however to those for whom he interests himself. And indeed, though persons were to promise only what in conscience they are antecedently bound to; yet if they tie themselves, either to do this, or to resign; whenever they fail in any one part of it, as to be sure they will in some, sooner or later, though perhaps very innocently; supposing the rigour of their bond insisted upon, (as who can say it will not?) they are at the mercy of the patron ever after. He becomes their ordinary; and is vested, by their imprudence,

* Wake's Charge, 1709, p. 24. Stillingfleet's Letter, p. 54.

† Wake, page 18.

imprudence, with a much greater authority, than the bishop hath: an authority of restraining their liberty, where the wisdom of the church hath not restrained it*: an authority of proceeding summarily; and depriving them, for whatever failures he hath thought fit to insert in the bond, without delay and without appeal: and this authority he may exercise ever after, when he pleases, to just the same purposes, as if they had covenanted at first to resign when requested.

Still, without question, many good persons have both required and given bonds of resignation of these latter sorts: and in many cases, as no harm at all hath been intended, so no particular harm hath been done by them. But in so many more there hath, and it is so necessary to go by general rules; and one specious exception doth so constantly produce others that are a little less so; till at last the most pernicious practices creep in†, that there is abundant reason to refuse making any contracts whatsoever in order to obtain presentation: and more especially there is reason to refuse them, on account of their mischievous influence on the revenues of the church: which was the immediate occasion of my speaking of them now; though I thought it by no means proper to omit the other arguments against them.

Perhaps it may be said: If patrons will have bonds of resignation, what can clergymen do? I answer, if clergymen will not give them, how can patrons help themselves? They must present without them, or their right must lapse to the bishop, who will. It may indeed be replied, that though one person rejects the offer, another will accept it: and therefore he may as well. But this would equally be an excuse for the worst of wrong compliances in every kind: and consequently it is an excuse for none. Besides, it may happen, that by arguing with patrons against such contracts, they may be convinced; and learn so just an esteem for those, who refuse them decently and respectfully, as not only to present them with double pleasure, but do them afterwards greater services, than they intended them before. At least whatever clergyman behaves in so worthy and exemplary a manner, will assuredly, if the rest of his conduct be suitable to that part, either by
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* Wake, p. 25.

† Wake, p. 25.

the care of God's providence, be raised in the world some other way ; or, by the influence of God's Spirit, be made easy and happy in his present situation.

But it may be objected further, that bishops argue with an ill grace against bonds at presentation, while they themselves take them at institution. And it must be owned, that in several Dioceses, particularly that of Lincoln out of which this was taken, and of Peterborough which was also taken from thence *, there is an ancient and immemorable custom, (customs, you are sensible, not being the same every where ;) for the clerk presented to indemnify the bishop and his officers from all suits at law for instituting him. And accordingly in this Diocese, bonds appear to have been taken for that purpose at all institutions for 120 years past : within which time, there have been nearly, if not quite, 700 given, that are now lying in the registry : And hence we may presume the practice hath been the same from the erection of the See. The original of it probably was, that a commission of inquiry being formerly sent out, as old registers prove, upon every vacancy † alledged, to certify the bishop, whether the living was really vacant, who was at present the true patron, and whatever else it was requisite he should know in order to institute : and the expence of this commission, and of the proceedings upon it, being of necessity considerable to the clerk, who bore it ‡ ; the cheaper method of a bond from him to save the bishop harmless, was substituted in its room. And a further reason might be, that, the bishop having 28 days allowed him, after the presentation was tendered, to consider and inform himself, whether he should institute the clerk presented or not ;

* In Lincoln Diocese they are taken only when the Bishop hath any the least suspicion about the patronage ; in Peterborough and Litchfield always ; in Canterbury whenever a new patron presents ; in Gloucester and Exeter they were taken till the time of the present bishops.

† That it was on every vacancy appears from Archbishop Stratford's constitution, *Sæva*, A. D. 142. in *Landw.* p. 222. and from *Landw.* p. 217. on Archbishop Peckham's constitution *per nostram provinciam* verb. *Inquisitionem*, and from Bishop Gibson's *Codex*, p. 857.

‡ It appears from the above constitution of Stratford, that the clerk paid for the commission, and therefore of course for all that was done upon it.

not ; the clerk was willing and desirous, rather to indemnify the bishop, if he would consent to institute him sooner, than to bear the inconvenience, and perhaps charges, of waiting to the end of that time. At least the only design of this bond was and is, that if the clerk's title to institution be questionable, the bishop may not suffer by granting it. Now a covenant for this end is surely a very lawful one, and subject to none of the mischiefs, which, I have shown you, attend bonds to patrons. Nor was any constitution of church or state ever pointed against it : nor I believe hath any harm ever happened from it.

But I must own too, that there is another condition added to these bonds, that the clerk shall resign his benefice if required by the bishop, in case any controversy arise, whether his institution be rightful. But this provision is, in the bond, expressed to be made only for the same purpose with the former, the indemnification of the bishop : and the penalty of the bond is so moderated, as to serve that purpose and no other. Accordingly, I have not heard that any one person hath ever scrupled, in point of conscience, to enter into this engagement ; the meaning of it being only, that if he prove to have no right, he shall quit : nor indeed, that any one hath found cause to scruple it in point of prudence. For as you may be sure the fulfilling it would never be required without necessity ; so I believe it hath never yet been required at all. That neither the intention of this covenant was bad, nor the reasons for it contemptible, you will readily allow, on being told, that it began to be inserted constantly in this Diocese, at the time when our present most reverend Metropolitan was placed over it : which seeming innovation was indeed only conforming more exactly to the old example of our Mother See *. But still as it is a condition, the insisting on which, in some cases, might have bad effects, that were not then foreseen † ;

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* I have seen a bond from the Bishop of Lincoln's registry with this covenant in it, printed in the time of Jac. 2. and the Bishop informs me the covenant hath been used ever since the Restoration ; how much sooner he knows not.

† *e. g.* A suit may be begun which would have proved ineffectual. Yet if the Incumbent resign, the expence of a fresh presentation and institution will at least be necessary for him ; but indeed the patron may present another ; and in the case of alternate patronage, another will present.

though in such cases it probably never would be insisted on, as it never hath: I have determined, with his grace's intire approbation, to omit it for the future.

And, in every thing, I shall not only be careful to make your burthens no heavier, but if it can be shown me, that I am able to do it, with justice and equity, I shall be glad to make them lighter. The fees taken of the clergy in this Diocese, whether at institutions or visitations, are not varied in any one article from those, which were returned to, and not disapproved by, a committee of parliament in the time of my predecessor. They are the same, as he informs me, with those taken in the time of his predecessor. Nor have I hitherto found proof, though I have inquired with some care, that they have been increased at all materially since the bishopric was founded*. Those of visitation I am sure have not in the least. And yet the diminution of the value of money in that interval hath reduced the same sum in name and quantity, to perhaps not a fourth of what it was in effect and use: on which account proportionable augmentations of fees have been made, I believe, in all temporal courts and offices; and ancient rules to the contrary have been justly deemed obsolete, the reasons of them having ceased. So that where this hath not been done, or not to any considerable degree, there is cause to render to all their dues with great satisfaction.

And here I must take the freedom of speaking to you about some dues owing to myself, Synodals and Procurations. The former are an ancient acknowledgement of honour and subjection, reserved by the Bishops of the Western Church, as long ago as when they settled their own share of the tithes, in each parish, to be the future property of the several incumbents: And it took its name from being usually paid at the Synodal meetings. Now, so small a tribute, especially if considered as a quit rent for so great a concession, can surely never be thought a hardship. The other, procurations, are also a payment several hundred years old, succeeding in the place of a much more expensive obligation, that of entertaining the bishop and his attendants, when he visited each parish. Neither of them hath been increased since their first beginning;

* *i. e.* Allowing each of the new instruments that are required, to cost as much as each of the old ones.

ning; the right to both is indisputably legal; and, as I am sworn to maintain all the rights of my See, I promise myself none of you will force me to do it in a way, that cannot be more disagreeable to you, than it will to me. If any one pleads, that complying with the demand of so trifling a sum will be inconvenient to him, it shall be more than returned him. If any one doubts, whether it is incumbent on him or not: his reasons for the doubt, whenever he lays them before me, shall be impartially considered, and allowed their full weight. But I hope no person will think it either decent or just, merely to refuse, without assigning a sufficient cause: and disuse for some years is not sufficient, in a matter, like this, of common right. Most of my clergy have very punctually shown me this little mark of their regard, amongst many greater. Whether any here present have omitted it, I do not know. But I trust you will all have the candor to think I have mentioned it, not from any wrong or mean motive, but because I apprehend it my duty, and have not the least doubt of your willingness to be informed or reminded of every part of yours.

And with this kind of digression I must conclude for the present. If God prolong my life and health to another opportunity, I shall proceed to the remainder of the subject. In the mean time, I heartily pray him to direct and bless you in all things.

A
C H A R G E

DELIVERED TO THE
CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE
OF
O X F O R D.

In the Year 1750.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

IN the course of my former visitations of this Diocese, I have recommended to you various parts of your duty, as ministers of the gospel in general, and of your respective parishes in particular. After things, more immediately and entirely of spiritual concern, I proceeded, in my last charge, to the care that you are bound to take of your temporalities; with which you are intrusted, partly for the service of religion in your own times, partly for your successors, as your predecessors were for you: a trust, which if any of them broke, or neglected, you are too sensible they did ill, to be excusable to your own minds, if you imitate them. And dividing this care into the behaviour, that is requisite at your coming into livings, during your incumbency on them, and when you are to quit them: I went through the first of these heads; giving you proper cautions, more especially against making any contract or promise inconsistent with the oath then required of you,

you, or prejudicial to your own benefices, or the common interests of the clergy. Therefore I now go on to the second, the vigilance with which you ought each to superintend the revenues and possessions of your church, whilst you continue minister of it.

I have too much cause, in every thing, to be sensible of my own unfitness to direct; but, in several articles, relating to this point, I am peculiarly unqualified; having little experience in them, and a yet less share of the proper abilities and turn of mind for them. However, I ought not to omit being of such use to you, as I can. There may be those amongst you, who are either still more unacquainted with these matters, or at least have not considered them all in the same light; as you must have observed, that very obvious instances, both of wisdom and duty, escape the attention of many, till they are pointed out to them. And a discourse, neither complete, nor possibly free from mistakes, may notwithstanding do service, by exciting persons to think on the subject, more than they have done hitherto.

Your care, in respect to this subject, consists of two parts; recovering what may be unduly withheld from your church, and preserving what is left.

It is very unhappy, that so troublesome and invidious an employment, as the former, should ever be made necessary; which yet it hath too often been. Glebe lands have been blended with temporal estates; and pretences set up, that only such a yearly rent, far inferior to the real value, is payable from them. Tithes and other dues have been denied; under false colours of exemptions in some cases, and of *Modus's* in many. Every unjust plea admitted makes way for more. And thus what was given for the support of the clergy in all future times, is decreasing continually; and becoming less sufficient, as it goes down to them. The laity themselves, if they would reflect, must see, that they have by no means any cause to rejoice in this. For, probably few of them in proportion will be gainers by what we lose; but the whole body of them, wherever the provision made for us becomes incompetent, must either make another at their own expence, or be deprived in a great measure of the good influences of our office, with respect to this world and the next. But whatever they are, we ourselves cannot surely fail to be deeply
concerned

concerned at the ill aspect, which these encroachments bear towards religion in ages to come. Whoever is indifferent about it, shows himself very unworthy of what he enjoys from the liberality of ages preceding. And whoever is grieved at it, will set himself to consider, not how he can augment the patrimony of the church, where it is already plentiful; or any where, by dishonourable methods; (you are very sensible, what injustice and folly there would be in such attempts) but how he can retrieve any part of it, which is illegally or unequitably seized and detained.

Now here the foundation of all must be, a diligent and impartial inquiry into the right of the case; for it would be absurd to deceive ourselves; and unfair to demand of others what we are not well persuaded is our due. Therefore to avoid both, we should ask the opinion of skilful and upright advisers. If this be in our favour, the next proper steps will be, laying our claim, with the proofs of it, so far as prudence will permit, before the person concerned; representing it, in a friendly and serious manner, as an affair, in which his conscience is interested; procuring the assistance of those, who have weight with him, if we know any such; taking the opportunity of his being, at any time, in a more considerate disposition than ordinary; pressing him, not to rely too much on his own judgment, where it may so easily be biased: yet forbidding him to rely on ours, if he would; and begging him to consult some other worthy and able person: offering to pitch on one or more, if circumstances persuade to it, whose determination shall conclude us both: and intreating him to say, whether he would not think this, in any other case, very reasonable. If still he cannot prevail on himself to comply: we may endeavour to lessen the difficulty, by proposing to accept a small payment, where none hath been made of some time; or a small variation, where a customary payment is pleaded: in hopes, that either the desire of enjoying, with some degree of good conscience, the main of what he withholds now with a bad one; or, at least, that of avoiding the cost and hazard of a contest, may win him over.

If none of these methods (which too commonly happens) will operate, after a due season allowed them for it; the only remaining remedy is an appeal to the law. But here I would be far from exciting any of you to plainly fruitless or over-
dangerous

dangerous attempts. I am very sensible, how unfavourable the times are to ecclesiastical pretensions, how enormous the expences of legal proceedings, how small the incomes of most benefices, how strait the circumstances of most clergymen: considerations, that, one should think, would restrain persons of any generosity, nay of any compassion, from bearing hard upon them. But they ought not to be pleaded by any of us, to excuse ourselves from undertaking a necessary burthen; which perhaps we are as well able to support, as any who will be likely to come in our stead. I am sensible too, and would have you be so, that scarce any thing is a more effectual hinderance to our doing good amongst our parishioners, than the character of being litigious; which many delight to give us: but with how little justice, in general, one single observation, amongst several that might be alledged, will more than sufficiently show; that of seven hundred suits for tithes, brought by the clergy into the Court of Exchequer, which is only about one in 14 parishes, during the space of 53 years, from the restoration to the year 1713, 600 were decided for them. It is true, our obtaining justice against any man, though in ever so clear a cause, is very apt to be resented, by himself and his friends at least, as grievous injustice. But using the previous amicable pleasures, which I have recommended, must in some degree prevent, either severe imputations upon us, or however the belief of them: and if not entirely, yet, by mildness, and prudence, we may certainly regain in time the reputation we never deserved to lose. At least our successors will enjoy, free from all blame, what we recover to them: whereas, if we acquiesce in the detention of our due, they will still be more likely to do so, and thus the loss of it will be perpetuated. Therefore in cases both sufficiently plain, and of sufficient importance, when all other ways have been tried to no purpose, and the right will be either extinguished, or much obscured, by delay; and perhaps the example spread further: I see not how we can excuse ourselves from applying to a proper court of justice, if we can hope to procure a sentence from it, without absolute ruin or extreme distress. For it is a mean and wicked selfishness, to hoard up wealth, consult our ease, or court the favour of our superiors, by letting the inheritance of the church

church be impoverished, while the guardianship of it is in our hands.

But then we must be doubly careful of what all men should be abundantly more careful of, than most are, that we never awe persons, especially poor persons, unjustly, by threatening them with law, into a compliance with our demands; and that no dispute of this kind ever entice us to do any thing fraudulent, or provoke us to do any thing ill-natured or vexatious. And particularly, if we have a demand on any of the people called Quakers, we should, if we possibly can, pursue it by that method only, which the act, for the more easy recovery of small tithes, hath provided: and rather sit down with a moderate loss, than do otherwise. For they are a generation loud in their complaints, unfair in their representations, and peculiarly bitter in their reflections, where we are concerned: unwearied in labouring to render us odious, and surprisngly artful in recommending themselves to the great.

But I proceed to the less troublesome and disagreeable duty of preserving what we still possess. Now to this end the most obvious way is, keeping the glebe in our own hands, and taking the tithes and all other dues ourselves: for which reason probably, amongst others, both ancient ecclesiastical constitutions, and later acts of parliament, have restrained and limited leasing of benefices. But many are so little qualified for this, and would be so great losers by it: and others would find it such a hinderance to the discharge of their ministerial office, or the pursuit of useful studies: nay, where it hath been long disused, the people might perhaps be so much offended with the novelty: that I would by no means press doing it in all cases, but only recommend it in proper ones. And where it is done, if a clergyman were to attend to such matters too closely; and, above all, were to be over-watchful and strict about small demands: it would naturally raise a contempt, if not hatred of him. And therefore it will be much better to content ourselves with giving parishioners, by prudent instruction, a general sense of their obligation to pay their dues; and by engaging behaviour, a general disposition to it; than to exact the minuter sorts of them with an indecent eagerness. But still, where rights, that may seem inconsiderable in each particular case, amount to more on the whole,

whole, than it is convenient to lose; and yet will be withheld, if not insisted on: we must do it, with as good a grace as we can; and remind persons, if there be need, that such as make this necessary, are indeed they, who act the mean part: that it is no fault of ours to require what the law hath allotted us for our maintenance; but a great misfortune, that so much of it consists in these petty articles.

Whatever tithes it will be incommodious to keep in our own hands, we may compound for with those who should pay them, or lease them to others. The former way will usually be kinder and more obliging, and so far more eligible. Yet, on the other hand, if we chuse the latter, our lessee will probably find it his interest to take them in kind, which will preserve our title to them in kind: and therefore, it may at least be expedient sometimes, in relation to any questionable parts of them. But if a tenant will rather give up some of our rights, than be at the trouble of asserting them, we may be under a necessity of doing it ourselves. And if we let any of our tithes to the proprietor of what they rise from, or to whomsoever we let our glebe, it should never be for too long a time at the same rent: else we run a great risque of being told, that we are intitled to nothing more. The person indeed, who makes the agreement with us, cannot think so; and yet what even he may pretend to our successors, we cannot foresee. But the person that comes after him, may insist on it even to us; and though the evil should be delayed longer, it will happen much too soon. Written agreements, discreetly worded, may be an useful and effectual preventive. Yet these, in course of time, may be lost by various accidents: or constancy of the same unvaried payment be alledged as a stronger argument on one side, than they are on the other. And if either should prove our case, contending at law with any Parishioner will be a very undesirable thing; and contending with a powerful one may be an impracticable thing. Therefore we ought never to begin customs, that may be dangerous; and if they are begun, even by our predecessor's fault, and yet more if by our own, we should think how to stop them without delay. But the least we can do, is resolutely to refuse authorizing such invasions, by giving any thing under our hands, which may but seem an acknowledgement that what we receive is a prescript and unchangeable

payment, unless we are very well assured that the law will esteem it such. We ought rather to lose it ourselves, than procure it by an act, that will prejudice our successors. Barely continuing to accept it unaltered, is doing more than enough to their disadvantage; therefore we ought on no account to go further; but, on the contrary, labour to procure and perpetuate, if we can, such evidence as may be of service to them.

Nor should we be careful only to preserve our benefices from any diminution of income, but also from any addition of expence, which would amount to the same thing: For heavy burthens, and very unfit ones, of riotous entertainments in particular, and those sometimes at the most improper seasons, have been introduced and established, in many places, by the inconsiderateness and supineness of incumbents. We shall do well, absolutely to break and annihilate such customs, if it remains legally possible; and if not to use our utmost influence towards procuring the consent of the persons concerned, to change them into something else, less exceptionable, and more useful, to be secured to them as firmly as may be; with a covenant added, that they shall be intitled to return to their old usage, if ever they are denied the benefit of the new.

Provided the above-mentioned precautions be observed, we are much at liberty to treat our parishioners as kindly as we will; and very kindly we ought to treat them; never permitting them, if we know it, to go without any thing, which is their right; to pay any thing, which is not due; or even to take any thing too dear: always making them equitable abatements, admitting every tolerable excuse for their delays of payment; and rather chusing to lose ever so much by them, than with any shadow of justice be accused of cruelty towards them. Yet, when we show them any indulgence, we should let them see, we are sensible of what we do for them: else they may impute it to our ignorance, not our goodness. And we ought not to be so easy with them, as to set them against a successor, who cannot afford to imitate us; or disqualify ourselves, by a promiscuous kindness to all, from being especially kind to such as want. But whatever improvements we make in our benefices, by whatever just means, it will be a prudent guard against envy, as well as a right behaviour on
other

other accounts, to increase, at the same time, either a sober modest hospitality, for neither excess nor vain show at all become our function; or, which is yet better, and ought never to be excluded by the other, a judicious charity; above all, to the industrious and virtuous poor, extended to their souls, as well as their bodies.

For the purpose of recovering or preserving the rights of vicarages, the original endowments of them may be very useful. And these you are to seek for in the register books of the Diocese of Lincoln, out of which this was taken. But I have collected copies of some; and can direct you to books, printed or manuscript, in which are copies of others; or to that part of the register-books, in which they may be found: and shall gladly give any of you whatever information is in my power. But you must not always conclude your present rights to be neither more nor less, than such an endowment sets forth; both because there may be a subsequent one, with variations; and because, where no subsequent one appears, long custom, in particular cases, may create a legal presumption, that there was one, upon which that custom was grounded.

For the same use, in Rectories, as well as Vicarages, Terriers were directed: how anciently I cannot say. But the 87th canon of 1603 enjoins, that the Bishop of each Diocese shall procure them to be taken, by the view of honest men in every parish, to be appointed by him, whereof the minister to be one: it specifies the particulars, of which they shall consist, and orders them to be laid up in the Bishop's registry. How often they shall be taken, it doth not mention. But plainly the changes, which time introduces, particularly in the names of the parcels and abuttals of glebe lands, require a renewal of terriers at reasonable distances. This canon hath been observed so imperfectly, that of about 200 parishes, of which this Diocese consists, there are terriers in the registry of no more than about 126; and of most of them only one; and of these, not 20, since the year 1685. In the convocation of 1704, complaints were made of the like omissions elsewhere; and in those of 1710, 1714, 1715, a scheme was formed, that where no terrier had been made for 7 years then last past, (which looks as if a repetition every 7 years was

intended *) the Minister should make one, with the Church-wardens, or such parishioners as the Bishop should appoint; that three indented copies of it in parchment should be signed by them; one to be exhibited at the Bishop's next visitation, the second at the Archdeacon's, and the third put in the parish chest †. But these proposals having never received the sanction of due authority, are to be considered as no more than prudent directions; the canon of 1603 still continues our only legal rule. And I am very desirous to perform the part which it assigns to me. But then I must beg your assistance in order to my nominating proper persons; that is, parishioners of the greatest probity, knowledge, and substance, to be joined in the work with you. Terriers indeed are of more use in causes tried before ecclesiastical judges, than temporal: who will not allow the spiritual judicatures to be courts of record; but still, when regularly made, they will have some weight every where. At least they will be valuable and authentic informations to your successors; and probably the parishioners of future times will be ashamed to insist on claims, contrary to what they will see inserted under the hands of their predecessors, perhaps their fathers or near relations. But then, to produce these good effects, indeed to prevent their producing bad ones, they must be made with great care. If there be a preceding terrier, it must be consulted: if it be defective, the defects must be supplied: if it be accurate, there must be no variations from it in the new, but where they are necessary to render descriptions intelligible; or where other alterations that have been made require them. For contradictory terriers will hurt, if not destroy, each other's evidence. It will also be right to express in them, what peculiar burthens are incumbent on the minister, or that there are none, as well as what property belongs to him. But if his right, or obligation, to any thing, be doubtful; either no terrier must be made, till the doubt is removed; or it must be set down there

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* Prideaux, Directions to Church-wardens, § 99. saith, That the Bishop, at every visitation usually requires a new Terrier. Bishop Gibson proposes that there should be a new one where there had been none since the Restoration.

† See Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 638, 656. It was also proposed that a Kalendar should be made of those which were put in the registry, and that they should not be delivered out, without security given.]

as a doubtful point; but by no means given up, to please any person, or serve any purpose whatever. For terriers, that make against the clergy, will do them abundantly more harm, than such, as make in their favour, will do them good. And lastly, though it may be needless and inconvenient to employ many persons in drawing up a terrier, yet the more sign it, the better; especially of considerable persons: for to omit any of them, and multiply the names of others, will appear suspicious. And as it may not always be easy to procure such hands, as you could wish; favourable opportunities must be prudently sought and waited for; and the work undertaken when they offer, and not before.

Other very useful precautions, of near affinity to this of terriers, are, that if any augmentations have been made of your benefices, by payments reserved in church or college leases, by the queen's bounty, or otherwise: or if any agreements have been entered into, between you, or your predecessors, and the patron and ordinary, for making any exchange or inclosures, or doing any other act, which affects your income, or any part of it, whether it be confirmed by a legal decree or not: proper evidences of these things should both be kept amongst your parochial papers, and deposited in the public office. Indeed, the law requires that augmentations, made by ecclesiastical bodies or persons, be entered in a parchment book, to be kept in the Bishop's registry for that end*. And though acts of parliament, passed for any of the above mentioned, may be considered as things more notorious; yet, without the same sort of care, the memory of these also may be lost, or some of the provisions made in them controverted.

There is still one thing more, that, amongst several other uses to which it extends, may be very serviceable to ascertain the rights of livings: I mean repeating, from time to time, the ancient practice of perambulations; which hath been long freed from superstition; and, if preserved also from intemperance and tumultuous contests, the last of which evils may be prevented by friendly discourse before-hand with the chief inhabitants of your own and the neighbouring parishes; the thanksgivings, prayers, and sentences of scripture, with which
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* 29 Car. 2. c. 8. § 4, 5, 6.

the injunctions of Queen Elizabeth direct it to be accompanied, will render it a very pious ceremony; and the civil benefits of it may be considerable. For though, without it, there seldom will arise any question, to what parish, lands, that have been long cultivated, appertain: yet concerning others, in the whole or in part, there often doth. And some, that are worth but little at present, may come hereafter to be of great value.

But, besides preserving the incomes of our benefices from encroachments, we are bound to preserve the lands and edifices, belonging to them in good condition. If therefore we commit waste on our glebe, or, through covetousness or negligence, impoverish it, or suffer our tenant to impoverish it, we act dishonourably and unjustly: as also, if we permit our dwelling-houses or out-buildings to fall into decay, for want of early or sufficient repair. A small expence in time may prevent the necessity of a much larger afterwards, and thus, by neglecting it, we may hurt ourselves; which would doubtless be unwise: but designedly throwing the burthen on our successor deserves a harsher name. And if we either squander extravagantly, or hoard avaritiously, what we save thus; it doubles the fault. If mere indolence be the cause of our omission; it is by no means a good principle; and produces effects, as bad, as if it were a worse. Nay, if we are influenced by the desire of making only a reasonable provision for our families: we have no right to provide for them by wronging our successor; and perhaps depriving our parishioners of the benefit of having a minister resident amongst them. Possibly some may say, that their executors must account for whatever they leave out of order; and therefore they do no harm. But, it may be, they will leave them nothing to account with: especially, as the common law prefers the payment of other debts before dilapidations*. At least they well know, that the law, though it will allow more than executors commonly pretend: and perhaps more, than would have prevented the damage, if applied in time; will not allow enough to repair it afterwards; or however, not to compensate moreover for the expence and trouble of taking that remedy; and that therefore, in all likelihood, a successor, to avoid law,

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* See Gibson's Codex, p. 791.

will chuse rather to accept of less, than he ought to have. Now, driving him to this is doing him a gross injury; and that very probably when he is just coming into the world in such circumstances, that it will weigh heavy upon him, and may put him behind hand for a long time. Some again will plead, that they really cannot afford to repair their houses. And doubtless the condition of many is very pitiable, and deserves the assistance, as well as compassion, of their richer neighbours and brethren. But still, what reason is there to think, that they, who come after them, will be better able, when the houses are grown worse? And what must it therefore end in, unless timely prevention be applied? Others may alledge, theirs are in repair; and no dilapidations will be found, when they leave them. But are they in such repair, so substantial and so decent, as a minister's house ought, that belongs to such a benefice; or only just habitable, and patched up to hold out a little longer? Perhaps you keep your house in as good a condition, as you found it. But did you think your predecessor acted well, when he left it you in no better? If not, that which was his duty is now yours. These things all incumbents ought to consider; but some more especially; as they who have large benefices, and they who have two; which may be ordinarily supposed equivalent to a large one. Yet these latter, in how good order soever they may, for their own sakes, keep the house they usually reside in, have too often left the other to be treated as a farmer or tenant pleases; till it hath grown, if not ruinous, yet very unsuitable to its next proper inhabitant. Again, rich persons, that are possessed of poor livings, ought peculiarly to reflect, how noble an opportunity is put into their hands of being benefactors to them; by repairing, or, if need be, rebuilding, and fitting up, the houses; and improving whatever little space of ground lies about them, in such manner, as will make both comfortable to the succeeding owners. And the very different method, which they have sometimes taken, of living in better habitations themselves, and letting these run into decay, is extremely ungenerous and illiberal. Yet indeed, on the other hand, making parsonage or vicarage houses, or the appurtenances of them, so large for their own convenience, as to bring on afterwards too great an expence in supporting them,

them, would be a mark, either of much vanity, or little consideration.

On this whole subject I must, instead of persuasion, use authority alone. But as the latter would be much less pleasing to me; so I hope the former will be as effectual with you. Else, the laws of the church in this nation, empower the Bishop, if incumbents do not repair their houses in a decent manner *, to take cognizance of the neglect either on complaint or by voluntary inquiry, and to proceed against them by ecclesiastical censures; or, after admonishing them in vain, to make himself what repair is needful out of the profits of their benefices; and what proportion of them shall be applied to this purpose, is left to his discretion †; but the injunctions of H. 8. Ed. 6. and Q. Eliz. directed a fifth ‡. And a further constitution of Othobon, published in the year 1268, expressly orders, that such a sequestration be made in the case of houses fallen down, as well as decayed ||. And the Ref. Leg. Eccl. had provided in the same manner for the same thing §, in conformity with evident reason. Indeed, where no house hath been for a long time, compelling the incumbent to rebuild one may seem hard. But is it not harder still, that his parishioners and successors should never more enjoy an advantage, intended to be a perpetual one? At least, whatever he may think of his legal obligation, he should consider, whether he is not in conscience obliged to devote some fitting share of his income to this use. Surely, if he doth not think it a strict duty, he must think it, unless there be some peculiar reason to the contrary, an excellently good action. And supposing that

* Semper tamen rationabilis consideratio sit habenda ad facultates ecclesiarum. Const. Edm. Si. Rector; on which Lyndwood's note is, Quia in beneficio pinguiori requiruntur ædificia magis sumptuosa quam in beneficio minus pingui. Lib. 3. Tit. 27. de Eccl. ædificandis. Verb. Facultates Ecclesiarum, p. 251.

† See Gibson's Codex, t. 32. c. 3. p. 789, &c.

‡ See Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 5. The Ref. Leg. Eccl. Tit. de Dilapidationibus, c. 2. p. 77. directs only a 7th.

|| Gibson's Codex, Tit. 32. c. 3. p. 789.

§ Tit. de Dilap. c. 2. p. 77.

that what he can lay by, will amount only to a tolerable beginning; yet others may, and probably will, sooner or later, add to it, and complete the work.

But whatever care you ought to take, and I ought to see that you take, in relation to your houses; there is still a much greater, for the same reasons and more, due from you, who are rectors, in relation to your chancels; and I am yet more expressly authorized, by statute-law as well as canon, to superintend this matter. Chancels are the most sacred part of the church: and the whole church ought to be preserved in a condition, worthy of that Being, whose it is; and fit to inspire his worshippers with reverence. The light of nature taught the Heathens to adorn their temples*. God himself provided, by express and minute directions, for the beauty of his sanctuary amongst the Jews: the ancient Christians imitated these precedents, as soon as ever the danger of persecution ceased†: and if the following ages carried their notions of magnificence and ornament in religious edifices too far, as undoubtedly they did, in heaping up treasures there, which had much better have been distributed to the poor, than kept to provoke the envy and avarice of the great: yet in this country, for several generations past, the contrary extreme hath prevailed to so shameful a degree, as must needs give Papists an exceeding great disgust to protestantism; and infidels no small contempt of Christians, as either despising inwardly the religion they profess, or being too fardid to pay it the common outward marks of respect.

Now, what hope can we have of bringing our people back, unless we set them the example? What can we say to our parishioners about their churches, or to lay-impropriators about their chancels; or, say what we will, how can it be expected they should mind us, if we are blameable ourselves on the same head? In respect of their duty in this point, and some concern, (indeed not a little) which you have with it I intend to speak at large, if God spare my life and health to another visitation. But at present I confine myself to what is more immediately and intirely the province of the clergy. Anciently the repair of the whole church was incumbent on

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* Hor. Od. 15. lib. 2. and Sat. 2. lib. 2. v. 103, 104, 105.

† See Bingham.

the Rector, as of common right*. I believe it continues to be so still in other nations: but the custom of ours hath released us from the largest part of the burthen: for which reason we ought to bear the remainder very chearfully; and exceed what in strictness might be demanded of us. Plainness of appearance, though carried almost to the borders of neglect, in relation to our own persons and abodes, may be a judicious and instructive mark of simplicity and humility. But it will be much more so, if, at the same time, we are liberal in providing for the honour of sacred things. And if, instead of that, we take just the contrary part; dwell, as the Prophet expresses himself, *in ceiled houses, and let the house of God lie waste*†; suffer the principal part of it, and that with which we are intrusted, to be in a worse condition, than any common room we live in; think nothing too good for ourselves, and every thing good enough for him and his service; it is an exceeding bad sign; and must have a most undesirable effect on all who observe it. I believe indeed that the chancels, which belong to incumbents, will be generally found in the best condition of any. Yet some even of these, I fear, have scarce been kept in necessary present repair, and others by no means duly cleared from annoyances, which must gradually bring them to decay; water undermining and rotting the foundations, earth heaped up against the outside, weeds and shrubs growing upon them, or trees too near them. Where sufficient attention is paid to these things; too frequently the floors are meanly paved, or the walls dirty or patched, or the windows ill glazed, and it may be in part stopt up, or the roof not ceiled; or they are damp, offensive and unwholesome, for want of a due circulation of air. Now it is indispensably requisite to preserve them not only standing and safe, but clean, neat, decent, agreeable; and it is highly fit to go further, and superadd, not a light and trivial finery, but such degrees of proper dignity and grandeur, as we are able, consistently with other real obligations. Perhaps they may have been long, or perhaps always, as mean as they are at present. But the meanness which in ages of less elegance might give no offence, may justly give more than a little now. And why should not the

* See Const. Othob. Tit. 17. and John de Athon, verb. Cancellor.

† Hag. i. 4.

the church of God, as well as every thing else about us, partake of the improvements of later times? In several of your chancels, I doubt not, every thing which I have been recommending is done. In others you have resolved to do it: and if any have not rightly considered the matter before, they must be sensible, that it was my duty to admonish them, and is theirs to regard the admonition. For, as to the excuses, which may be pleaded under this head of Chancels, they have been obviated, under the former of parsonage-houses.

It only remains now, that I speak briefly to the third point, our obligations in regard to the temporalities of our benefices, when we have a near view of quitting them; whether by death, which may be near us at any time, and must be so in old age; or any other way. Some, because they were not to continue incumbents long, have set themselves to consult their own interests, by neglect of all expensive duties, by committing waste, by allowing others to commit it. A manner of proceeding, in all cases unjust; when they are removing to a better income, peculiarly dishonourable; when they see their latter end approach, shockingly wicked; unless the decay of their faculties furnish some excuse for them. Rejecting therefore all such practices with just abomination, we are bound in these circumstances, to consider seriously, what our past faults and omissions, relating to this article, have been; to undo, as far as we can, what we have done amiss; to do immediately what we ought to have done sooner; to make the amends we are able, if any harm hath happened by the delay; and, indeed, some amends for the chance there was, that harm might have happened. But, how rightly soever we may have acted hitherto, there will still be duties, peculiar to the time, which I am now supposing; that we secure to our successors whatever books, deeds, and papers, relating to our benefices, came down to us from our predecessors; whatever evidences our own incumbency hath furnished; in a word, whatever notices may be of importance, concerning the rights, or the value, of the living, we enjoy. But particularly, if we have been so inconsiderate, as to make any long agreement, which a succeeding minister may be in danger of mistaking, or others may be tempted to set up, for an established prescription; as may easily happen, if it was done many years ago; we ought

to leave them the most authentic proofs of the real state and truth of the case. Some have through indolence omitted these things. Others have designedly kept in their own power, or left in that of their executors, all such means of information; that their successors, in order to receive them, may be bound to behave reasonably and kindly, as they are pleased to term it; that is, may be under a necessity of submitting to whatever unreasonable things shall be demanded of them; in respect of dilapidations, or any other point. This, you cannot but see, would be making an unfaithful use of those lights, which have been intrusted with you by others, and an oppressive one of those which you have added yourselves. Or supposing that only equitable requests are made to a successor, and that he refuses them: still it is not a Christian part, to prevent this injury by threatening, and much less to revenge it by doing, what in all likelihood would be a far greater injury; and may extend its bad effects, beyond the person, who hath given the provocation, to all that shall fill his place hereafter, though perfectly innocent; and to every one that might have shared in the advantage of their enjoying a more plentiful income. Nor is it sufficient, that you disapprove such conduct, unless you make a due provision, that your representatives, when you are gone, shall not be guilty of it. You may have a better opinion of them, in this respect, than they deserve: at least, there can be no harm in taking a little more care of such a matter, than might be absolutely necessary.

One powerful motive to be careful in all the points, which I have been mentioning, is, that few things will contribute more to your maintaining while you live, and leaving when you die, the character of men of probity and honour, amongst your neighbours in general, and your brethren of the clergy in particular, than your diligent and disinterested attention to act worthily and kindly in relation to your successors, though probably you know them not, or however have no personal connection with them. Nor will many things throw a blacker or more lasting stain upon persons, than a low cunning, or a selfish indifference, in these affairs. But indeed conscience, as well as reputation, is deeply concerned in the matter, as I doubt not but you are all sensible. Nor surely will any one
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else imagine, either that my exhortations to you, any more than yours to your hearers, imply you to be guilty of, or especially inclined to any of the faults, against which they are levelled; or that, by speaking thus long of your worldly affairs, I seem to think them of weight equal, or comparable, to your spiritual functions. But the best of us have need to be admonished of all our duties, be they duties of higher rank or lower, each in their turns. Temporal things are not to be neglected; and those least of all, which are set apart for the service of things eternal. But then we must be watchful over them, in order to employ them as they were meant to be employed: and if we preserve and transmit them ever so faithfully, but use them unfaithfully; studying only or chiefly to enrich or advance ourselves, or gratify our sensual appetites, or love of diversions, or of elegant appearance, by means of those revenues, which were given us for ends widely different; (partly to make a comfortable and moderate, not a superfluous and invidious provision for ourselves and ours, and partly to serve the purposes of religion and charity) we offend God, sin against our brethren, and provoke men to take from us what they are too ready to say we do no good with: as indeed little would be done, were such a conduct general. It is true, and the laity ought to consider it a great deal more than they do, that we have very few of us much, if any thing to spare. But they who have, should *let their light shine before men*, and be seen to lay it out in pious uses prudently chosen: and the poorest should occasionally give what alms they can; and make amends for their inability on this head, by a double diligence in useful instruction, pious example, and obliging behaviour to the meanest of their people. Without a remarkable degree of such care, we shall have few or no friends: and notwithstanding it, we shall have many enemies. This is hard treatment: but angry complaints will only make it worse; and the most reasonable expostulations not much better, unless we first consider, wherein we are faulty or defective, and amend it: wherein we are unjustly blamed or suspected, and clear ourselves: then patiently persevere in well-doing, *in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the armour of righteousness on the*
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right hand and on the left, through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report *. Other means, if they could support us, cannot enable us to answer the end of our institution. But by these we may still hope, not only to confute, but, which must ever be our chief aim, if possible, to convert, at least to mollify our adversaries; and so recommend ourselves to more impartial persons, that they may *receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls* †. Or should we, after all, in respect of ever so many, *labour in vain, and spend our strength for nought, yet our judgment is with the Lord, and our work with our God* ‡.

* 2 Cor. vi. 4, 6, 7, 8.

† Jam. i. 21.

‡ Isa. xlix. 4.

A
C H A R G E

DELIVERED TO THE
CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE
O F
O X F O R D.

In the Year 1753.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

I Have never attempted in my former visitations, nor shall I in this, to entertain you with any thing new and curious: thinking it much fitter for me, and better for you, to speak to you of such points, immediately relating to common practice, as, though easily understood, are too frequently disregarded. With this view I have gone through the principal parts of your duty, as parochial ministers, in respect both of spirituals and temporals. But, besides what is wholly incumbent on yourselves, in some things you are jointly concerned with your Church-wardens: and in others, though not expressly commissioned by law to interpose, you may do it nevertheless, with peculiar propriety, weight, and influence.

Of the former sort are those offences against religion and morals, which the Church-wardens are bound by oath to present: and the Incumbent, or his Curate, impowered and charged

ged, by the 113th and following canons, to join with them in presenting, if need be; or to present alone, if they refuse. This naturally implies, what the 26th canon expresses, that the Minister is to urge the Church-wardens to perform that part of their office. Indeed your first endeavour should be, by due instructions and exhortations, to hinder such offences: your next, by due reproofs, public or private, to amend them. But if both prove ineffectual, what remains is, to get them corrected by authority. I am perfectly sensible, that both immorality and irreligion are grown almost beyond the reach of ecclesiastical power; which having, in former times, been very unwarrantably extended, hath since been very unjustly and imprudently cramped and weakened many ways. I am sensible also, that sometimes Church-wardens, nay, even ministers, are so dependent on persons, who deserve to be presented, that they cannot present them without imminent hazard of ruining themselves; and farther still, that some offenders, if they were thus exposed, would only become worse, and set themselves to make others worse; while some again, as the apostle expresses it in this very case, would be *swallowed up with over much sorrow* *. Now, surely it cannot have been designed by our gracious Redeemer, or the rulers of his church, that the power of spiritual censures, which the same apostle hath twice declared the Lord to *have given for edification, not for destruction* †, should be exercised in circumstances like these. Therefore, when circumstances are evidently and undeniably of this kind, I think you should not insist on your Church-wardens presenting. But there is much more danger of their being guilty of too great remissness, than running into overmuch rigour. And therefore you must advise and intreat them to make presentments of sinners, where probably it will be useful; and to contemn the displeasure of bad people, when it can have no extremely ill consequences, (of which there is commonly much more fear than is necessary) for the hope of their amendment and the good of others round them. The very office of Church-wardens obliges them to this: their oath yet more firmly. And if they are backward still, after being told it doth; you must acquaint them, that you are directed by the 26th canon, (in the execution of which, however,

* 2 Cor. ii. 7.

† 2 Cor. x. 8. and xiii. 10.

ever, as in all points of discipline, discretion should be used) to refuse them the holy communion; not indeed for every neglect of presenting offences, but if they wilfully neglect it in desperate defiance of their oath, when they are urged to it by their neighbours, their ministers, or ordinary: for so the same canon describes the case: in which case likewise you will inform them, the court is authorised, by canon 117, to proceed against them for perjury. But, along with these terrors, you will be sure to join fitting encouragement. You will promise to defend them to the parishioners, and even to the person presented, as doing only their duty. You will assure them, as you may, first, that the court will take notice of their presentments no farther than is proper; so that they shall not incur the displeasure of the offenders and their friends for nothing: then, that it will proceed, not with a view to gain, but to reformation and example; not with excessive, nor, if it can be avoided, with the utmost rigour, but with equity and moderation.

If all this be unsuccessful, you must, in cases that require it, offer to join with them, or even resolve to present without them. But you must never take any step in these matters, much less the more extraordinary steps, from motives of resentment, interest, or party. If such inducements can be, with any colour of reason, imputed to you, they will so grievously discredit what you do, that probably you had better do nothing. But only take care to show, that you act merely from good intention, accompanied with temper and prudence, after trying gentler methods in vain: and some will vindicate, and even applaud you; more will inwardly and silently respect you; and the number of the rest will not be formidable.

But then, whoever brings a complaint, must enable the court to take due cognizance of it: else presentments will be despised; and the consequences be worse than if they had not been made. Evidence must of necessity be furnished; otherwise there can be no proceeding. Expences, I hope I may promise, will be as low as possible; and they should be cheerfully borne, for the good of the parish and of the public. It is not reasonable that the court should bear them. Temporal courts never do. And besides, there is room for plausible, though unjust suspicions of partiality, where the judge ap-

pears to be in effect prosecutor too, and is interested in condemning the party accused.

When persons are presented, you must use your best endeavours to make them sorry, not merely that they are in danger of being punished, but principally that they have sinned: and in proportion as you succeed in that, recommend them to such favour as can be shown them. When persons are excommunicated, (which I heartily wish no one ever was but for crimes, though indeed a wilful contempt of authority is a great crime) you must press them to consider seriously how they would be affected, if a physician or a lawyer of eminence pronounced their case desperate; and of how much greater importance the concerns of eternity are, than those of time. You must also admonish them, that slighting a censure, passed on them for their amendment, will make their condition still more deplorable. And when they have been denounced excommunicate, by the 85th canon, the Church-wardens are to see, that, in every meeting of the congregation, they be kept out of the church. Nor must you suffer them to be sureties for children in baptism, to receive the Holy Eucharist, or to have Christian burial. Farther, if they continue without absolution for three months, the 65th canon directs you to declare them excommunicate in the parish-church every half year; that others, meaning such as have no necessary connections with them, may thereby be admonished to refrain their company, and excited the rather to procure out a writ *de excommunicato capiendo*; that is, if the circumstances of the case make it requisite. Again, when persons do penance, you must be diligent to make them seriously sensible of the usefulness of such discipline; and the unspeakable obligations they have to the gospel of Christ, which alone assures men of forgiveness on any terms. And lastly, both on all such, and all other fit occasions, you must remind your people, that however the censures of the church may be relaxed or evaded, the final judgment of God on obstinate sinners is both unavoidable and insupportable.

Besides the presentment of persons who give offence, you are concerned likewise in that of things belonging to the church, which are not kept in good repair and order.

I have already spoken to you concerning the repair of your houses and chancels: and enlarged on the reasons why both,
but

out especially the latter, should be always preserved, not only in a firm and safe, but decent and respectable state. Now the same reasons hold, in regard to the rest of the church: and after you have set the example in your own part, you may, with reputation and weight, call on your parishioners to do what is proper in theirs. And indeed you are bound to it. For, as John of Athon hath justly observed *, *Licet per consuetudinem exoneretur rector a sumptibus præstandis, non tamen eximitur a cura & solitudine impendendâ*. Thus far even the body of the church is still under your inspection; and if any thing be remarkably amiss there, and you take no notice, good persons will lament it, as a bad sign and of bad consequence; others will make your indifference a plea to excuse their own; and yet, while they are glad of it, will be likely enough to condemn you for it: and perhaps be led by it to think meanly of religion, as well as of you. Besides, Church-wardens have often but little sense of propriety in these matters; therefore you should labour to give them a sense of it: convince them, by reason and scripture, of the honour due to the house of God: show them, that their own honour too is interested: that a church in handsome condition is a credit to the whole parish; and in particular to the officers, who have put it in that condition, and whose names will be long remembered on that account. They are often afraid of the expence. Argue with them, that things may be done gradually, and so the expence be rendered almost imperceptible; persuade them to lessen their expences in needless matters; in eating and drinking at visitations, and on other occasions, sometimes to excess, never to any good purpose: and observe to them, how much righter and more commendable it would be, to lay out or lay up that money for proper uses: how shameful indeed, to squander it in riot and folly, and be never the better, but the worse the next day; when they might dispose of it so, as to see the good effects of it for years, and have them seen for ages. If still you cannot influence the present Church-wardens, try their successors. You have a concurrent right with the parishioners in chusing them; and if your opinions differ, you are to chuse one, they another; unless there be a custom to the contrary. Surely, then within some reasonable time, you may get such as will hearken to you. If you fail of success that way; desire your people to reflect how their money

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goes;

* Const. Cthob. 17. verb. ad hoc tenentur. p. 113.

goes ; not in fees of visitations, which are no higher now, than when the value of money was thrice, perhaps five times higher, but in extravagance and intemperance : that therefore they ought not to complain of the court, but of their own officers ; indeed ought to disallow the wrong and idle articles of their accounts ; and may be assured, the court will support them in doing so.

Sometimes the Church-wardens are willing to lay out the money as they ought, but the parishioners unwilling. In that case you must acquaint the former, that no man's consent is wanting for their repairing and keeping in good order, both the church and every thing belonging to it, which is either necessary, or which they found there : nor is the consent of every man requisite, but of the majority only of a parish-meeting, duly called, for adding any thing new, provided the ordinary approve it. However, they should do their utmost, and you should assist them, to procure the concurrence of all the parishioners ; or, at least, of as many of them as possible : to whom you will represent, for this end, that a moderate expence now will prevent a much greater hereafter : that almost all the churches in the nation were built many ages ago, and a very great part of them about the same time : that without constant and substantial repairs, in another generation or another century, they will be falling at the same time ; and how will they be rebuilt ? The inhabitants, if we may guess from what we see at present, will be both less able and less inclined. As for help from Bishops ; those for other things produce but little, but those for churches extremely little, to the great shame indeed of persons who call themselves Christians : and you should labour to rectify their prejudices on this head, and excite them to be more charitable. But God knows whether they will ; and if hereafter they should, what can be hoped from it, when almost every parish in the land will want a Bishop ? In many, it is to be feared, there will be no churches ; in others, wretchedly mean ones ; to the contempt of all religion amongst infidels, and of the protestant religion amongst papists. Repeat and inculcate it therefore on your people, that they must take care of the churches they have : if not, their posterity will run the risque of having none. Too many will scarcely be moved, even by that consideration ; but there is the more need of moving such as you can ;

can ; and, getting into a good condition of moving more, by all proper methods of recommending the gospel and yourselves.

But to persons of rank and figure in your parishes, one should hope you might apply with very fair prospect of success. To these you may surely represent at favourable seasons, that labouring people part very hardly with the money, which they get very hardly ; that therefore their superiors should not only use their influence and example to make them willing, but indeed should do for them what perhaps they are almost as unable to do, as they are unwilling ; especially what goes any length beyond repairs absolutely necessary ; for that people of low degree, though they may have some notion of neatness and elegance, yet will murmur grievously to pay much for it in their churches, and part of their ill-humour will fall on the doctrine taught there : that especially if they are tenants, their concern in the place being temporary, and possibly also short or uncertain they will of course endeavour to shift off the burthen from themselves ; but the landlords have a more lasting interest, and will find their account better in doing things early at their own cost, than in letting them run on, till the cost is much greater : for then, in some shape or other, it must come out of their pockets. With these considerations you will not fail to join others of a higher nature : that sacred fabrics are appointed to the noblest of uses, the worship of the great God ; and to preserve or put them in a condition suitable to it, is one very proper method of expressing and cherishing a sense of piety in their own minds, and spreading it through their families, neighbours, and dependants ; whereas, by suffering his house to be an object of contempt and scorn, while perhaps they spare nothing to beautify their own, they will be understood, and will tempt all around them, to despise the service performed there, and him to whom it is paid : that repairing and embellishing their churches will employ the poor full as beneficially as adorning their seats and gardens, and procure them a much better grounded and more general esteem. Indeed it is surprising, that noblemen and gentlemen will squander vast sums in the gratification of private luxury and vanity, for which more condemn than applaud them ; and not consider, that much smaller sums bestowed on public works, especially

pecially in honour of religion, would gain them the admiration of a whole country, and the peculiar blessing of many, whom they would thus ease from burthens; besides that, they might show their good taste, if that be the favourite point with them, no less in one way than the other. But even heathen writers have observed long ago, that expensive personal indulgence, and mean-spirited parsimony in what regards the community, are often companions, and always ill symptoms*.

But you may press the obligation of repairing and ornamenting yet more strongly, both on such of the nobility gentry, and on such colleges and ecclesiastical persons or bodies, as are impropiators; and likewise on the lessees of these latter; because they have a more beneficial interest in the estate than the lessors. Being possessed of the greater share of what was originally given for the support of the service and the fabric, they are bound, at least in conscience, to take care of both, if it be needful: but of one part of the fabric, the chancel, they are indisputably by law to take care. And yet, too commonly, even those amongst them, who should be the most attentive to this point, strangely neglect it; or throw it on their tenants, who they know will of course neglect it, and concern themselves no farther. So their chancels are only in such sort of repair, as their barns and out-houses. Now, handsome benefactions to put them in a better condition, given from time to time, and especially when good fines are received, would show piety and generosity at once; would abate the unjust envy and hatred, to which academical and ecclesiastical owners of estates are liable; and set an example, which others might probably imitate.

I have already said, in speaking of chancels, that the ornaments of sacred places ought not to be light and gaudy, but modest and grave. Amongst these, a very proper one, of the cheaper kind, is, writing on the walls chosen sentences of scripture. This was done as early as the fourth century†: but in process of time ceased to be done, at least in the vulgar tongue: and being restored at the Reformation, was forbidden, as promoting that cause, by Bishop Bonner, in Queen Mary's

* Cic. pro Flacco, Hor. Od. l. 2. 15. Sat. l. 2. 2. 103, 104, 105.

† Bing. viii. 8, 3.

Mary's reign *. It not only diversifies the walls very agreeably and decently, but affords useful matter for meditation to the people, before the service begins; and may afford them useful admonition, when their eyes and thoughts are wandering in the course of it. For these reasons, I presume, the 82d canon directs, that such sentences be written in convenient places; and likewise, that the ten commandments be set upon the east end of every church and chapel: to which undoubtedly the creed and Lord's prayer, though not mentioned in the canon, are very fit companions.

You must also endeavour, that such care may be taken of the furniture of the church, and whatever is used in it, as the canons and rubrics and the nature of the thing require: that the surplice be originally of proper linen, and kept clean, and renewed before it becomes contemptible by age: that the bible and prayer-books be whole and un sullied, and well bound: that the vessels for the celebration of both the sacraments, and the cover of the holy table, but more especially the bread and wine placed upon it, be suitable in all respects to the solemnity: not such as may give disgust to the more delicate, and tempt them to abhor, as the scripture expression is, *the offering of the Lord* †. These are in their kind, points of importance; and such as you may for the most part easily carry. Another thing, worthy of notice, is the condition of your church-yards. I take it for granted, though I am afraid I forgot to name it, that you keep those, which belong to yourselves, neat and decent: not turning in cattle to defile them and trample down the grave-stones; and make consecrated ground such, as you not suffer courts before your own doors to be; but taking the profits of the herbage in such manner, as may rather add beauty to the place. And I hope where a church-yard belongs to an impropriator, you will do your best to get the same respect paid it; and to whomsoever it belongs, the fences well kept up.

If, in any or all of the particulars, which I have specified, your representations will be less offensively introduced, or your attempts be of more weight, for your being able to say, that I directed you to make them, I do hereby direct you accordingly; and desire you to say, that I did. Nor should you
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* Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 108.

† 1 Sam. ii. 17.

be contented with a transient mention of the subject once or twice; but, where there is any hope, return to it on proper occasions, and try the force of modest importunity. If, after competent trial, you find no effect, you must urge the churchwardens, to present what is amiss, if they will do no more. Indeed such things as belong to their own care, they should not present, but amend; and the canons require, not the former, but the latter. Only when they have not time for the latter, the former is all they can do; and when they have, it is better than doing nothing. For it gives notice, and furnishes room for admonitions and injunctions. If there be need, here again you must encourage them to present, by engaging to plead their cause with the parishioners. You may also safely promise them, that they shall suffer no oppressive or hard treatment, shall not be required to lay out upon any thing more than is fitting, and shall have reasonable time allowed, even for that. I need not say, that both to qualify yourselves for pressing them to present, and on many other accounts, you must take effectual care, that nothing belonging to you be presentable. Else they will have a ready answer for you: and it will be a sad thing to stand in awe and be at the mercy of those, who ought to reverence you. If you cannot prevail on them otherwise, I apprehend you may join with them; and if you cannot prevail on them at all, I apprehend you may present without them, in the case of repairs, as well as offences, by virtue of the interpretation, which practice hath put on the above-mentioned canon: though it speaks, I own, expressly of nothing besides offences. But, in doing either of these things, you must be sure to observe the cautions given under the former head.

Yet after all, I am well aware, that you may often have great difficulties to encounter, possibly sometimes too great to surmount. And to diminish them for you, I have endeavoured to procure a parochial visitation from the Archdeacon, which he hath promised. But then, for the credit of your parishioners and your own, let this be an inducement to put things in good order, that he may find them so; not to leave them in bad order, that he may rectify them.

Another very useful institution, for these and many valuable purposes, was that of rural deans; which took place here before

before the conquest, was kept up till the great rebellion, was restored afterwards in several Dioceses, and particularly in this by the admirable Bishop Fell *, was found not quite extinct and was completely revived by the late excellent Bishop of Gloucester †, in that County, and is preserved to this day in some parts of the nation besides. These Deans, being chosen out of the resident parochial clergy, could inspect, with small trouble, the churches and parishes within their several narrow districts; and being bound to report what they found amiss, could do it with little or no offence. In the latter end of Queen Anne's, and the beginning of the late King's reign, the convocation made some progress towards the re-establishment and better regulation of this office. When that, or any other branch of discipline, may be the subject of public consideration again, is very uncertain. I should be very glad, with your approbation, to set it up once more amongst us, in such form as might be most beneficial and satisfactory: but contented at present with hinting the matter, I leave and recommend it to your serious thoughts.

A third particular, of considerable importance, in which you are jointly concerned with the church-wardens, is the keeping of the register-book. The 70th canon directs, that it be of parchment; and though an act of parliament, lately passed, allows marriages to be registered in a paper book: yet parchment is far more durable; nor is the difference of expence worth regarding, as it returns so seldom. This book should be strongly bound, and not over large; lest it should be worn and damaged, before it is filled. For the safe preservation of it, and doubtless of all preceding books of the same kind, the canon orders, that a chest be provided with three locks and keys; one for you, one for each of the church-wardens, who are ordinarily two; and that on Sundays, if there hath been any christening, marriage, or burial, in the week before, it shall be entered there. I am afraid it is seldom thus kept: and yet there would be no great trouble in it, after a little use. Or where that is otherwise, either the minister or a church-warden should keep it; and each of them should see from time to time, how it is kept. The entries, if they cannot well be made every Sunday, should be made very frequently.

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* Kennet. Paroch. Ant. p. 653.

† Bishop Benson.

quently, and in the mean time the minister, if he hath not the book, should take memorandums. He is the person directed to write in it, and usually much the fittest. But if, through any accident that happens not to be so, he should appoint a proper person, and superintend him. The names and surnames of the parents ought to be added, in registering not only baptisms, where it is enjoined, but marriages and burials too, as far as may be; for it may prevent doubts and disputes. It will also be very useful, to put down the day of the birth and death of each person, as well as of the baptism and burial. The late act above mentioned hath directed farther, that every page of the register of marriages be numbered, to discover if any leaf be afterwards cut out; and ruled with lines at equal distances, to discover if any article be afterwards put in. And you will do very well to observe the same precautions in registering baptisms and burials. When a page is filled, the canon requires the minister and church-wardens to subscribe their names; which they should do just below the the last line. And if this be not done immediately, it may, without any inconvenience, be done soon after; and was done by me and the church-wardens, for many years, in one of the most populous parishes of the kingdom. Lastly, the canon requires, that an attested copy of this book be annually transmitted to the bishop's registry, received without fee, and faithfully preserved there; and it authorizes me to proceed against those, who are negligent about any of its directions. I must therefore both intreat and insist, that you inquire in what condition your old and your present register books are, and get them kept for the future as they ought. I have more than once been put under great difficulties in ordinations, for want of exactness in the register of baptisms. That of marriages is of so great concern, that altering it designedly, to establish or void a marriage, is by the act above mentioned made felony. In all cases the book, faithfully kept, is good evidence; and falsifying it is punishable at common law. I would only observe further, on this head, that in the preamble of a bill, which passed the House of Commons this last session, and had a second reading in the House of Lords, it was asserted as notorious, that "great inconveniences have arisen from the present defective manner, in which parochial registers are formed; and the loose and uncertain method, in which they are kept

“kept and preserved; whereby the evidence of descents is frequently lost and rendered precarious.” So far as this may be fact, it will be most for our honour to amend it, without the interposition of the Legislature.

A fourth Point, of which I hope you will think yourselves bound, if not by law, yet in conscience, to take a joint care with the church-wardens, is that of parochial charities. The minister is the representative of the church, intrusted with its interests; and you ought to endeavour, that such benefactions be first preserved, and then applied in a proper manner.

If it be doubtful, whether such or such a donation hath been given to your church or poor, or the support of a school in your parish, you will make proper inquiry concerning the matter. If it be given by any writing, you will procure that writing, or an attested copy of it, to be laid up safely, either in the parish chest, or the bishop's registry; indeed a copy in each place would be best; and an account of the gift should be inserted in your parish book. For if deeds are left in private hands, and especially without authentic notice where they are left, they are sometimes designedly suppressed; and often undesignedly destroyed or lost, through the ignorance or carelessness of the persons possessed of them. It will also be very proper, to have a table mentioning the charity, hung up in your church, that a grateful remembrance of the benefactors may be continued to posterity, and others incited to follow their good example: as a paper of directions, drawn up by the lower house of convocation in 1710, hath well expressed it*. If the benefaction be an estate vested in trustees, it will be very material to get the trust renewed in due time; else in all likelihood there will be expence, if not danger; and to trustees of as good credit and ability as possible. They must likewise be warned, never to let out such lands on long leases, or at very low rents, in favour of any body; but to raise the rents when they can; at least to vary them, which will make it easy to raise them, when there is opportunity: otherwise it will soon be pretended, that they have no right to raise them; of which there are some unhappy instances in this Diocese. If the gift be in money, you must press to have it pla-

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* See Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 638.

ced in the public funds, in case it be considerable enough ; or else in the best private hands, and on the best security that can be obtained ; paying no regard in such cases to personal friendships ; and being particularly careful, that parish officers do not keep it in their own custody. If they do, the interest will usually be paid out of the public money, and most probably the principal will be lost in a few years.

But charities are preserved in vain, unless they are well applied ; and they are often sadly misapplied. Gifts to the church, where it is not otherwise expressed, must be supposed intended for beautifying the church ; else it will be never the better for such gifts ; for it will be equally repaired without them : the parishioners are bound to that : and the chief of the burthen usually falls upon the richest, for whose relief charities were certainly not intended. And yet such benefactions are too commonly employed, not only in mere repairs, but in what hath no connection with the fabric ; in providing bread and wine for the communion, in paying churchwardens bills for all sorts of things, it may be for extravagant and riotous entertainments amongst the rest, in easing the poors rates, in I know not what ; and the church all the time, instead of being any way improved, suffered to grow dirty and even ruinous. A lamentable abuse of this kind, (where a steeple fell down, and was in part rebuilt by contribution, while an estate, more than sufficient to have kept the whole building in good order and beauty, was perverted to other uses) I have taken much pains to rectify, but fear it is not thoroughly rectified yet. Again, gifts to the poor were certainly intended for the benefit of the poor ; to make provision for such of them as are not on the parish list, or a better provision for such as are. And yet they are sometimes embezzled and squandered, in a great measure, if not wholly ; sometimes bestowed to serve private or party purposes ; and very frequently sunk into the legal rate ; so the wealthy are benefited ; and the needy have not a farthing more, than if nothing had been given for them.

I know it is not always easy, perhaps not always possible for you, to remedy these ill practices. But a great part of the blame will be laid on you, right or wrong, unless you try to remedy them. And it may prove less difficult than you
imagine

imagine. Church-wardens and overseers perhaps are ignorant, or going on thoughtlessly, and would be thankful to you for good advice: or however would be ruled by it, on your representing to them the heinousness of robbing God or the poor; and the honour it will do them, and the consolation it will afford them, to have put things into a right channel. Or supposing them backward to comply, you may be able to get considerable persons in the parish or neighbourhood to second you. At least you will get the reputation of a most laudable zeal, and if you conduct that zeal aright, of discretion also; and these together may produce unexpected success; especially where the abuse is not yet become inveterate. But if nothing else will do, and the case be plain, and the object of sufficient importance: Recourse should be had to the authority of the law; and you should be willing to bear a proportion of the charges, if it be requisite and you are able; only taking the strictest care to proceed with mildness and fairness.

I have now finished the course of directions to you, which I began 15 years ago. And as I can truly say, that in this, and every part of my behaviour as your Bishop, I have, thro' the Divine assistance, diligently laboured, to do my duty with uprightness, and promote your good and that of your parishioners, present and future; so I hope you will accept my endeavours with candour, and study to profit by them; excusing my failings, which I know have been many, and will now be too likely to increase. I am advancing apace into the decline of age. Three of my brethren*, my oldest and best friends, have gone before me in less than twelve months. I must expect to follow them soon. Whether I may live; or, if I live, whether I may be able to meet you thus again, God only can foresee. May he grant us to meet in a better world!

But before I conclude, permit me to subjoin, to these general admonitions, a few words concerning two particular occurrences.

In the first place, I return you my hearty thanks for the pains which you have taken in behalf of the Society for propagating the gospel. The collection hath upon the whole been
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* Bishops Butler, Benson, and Berkeley.

made very successfully throughout the kingdom ; and amounts to almost 19000/. if not more ; whereas ten years ago it fell short of 15000/. But I believe the contribution of this county hath been in proportion the largest of any. The last time it was barely 300/.; nor was that to be accounted small; and now it is very near 500/.: I mean in both cases exclusive of the university ; which distinguished itself very honourably then, and, I doubt not, will at present. May God increase, and bless, and reward the zeal of all his servants every where for supporting, and enlarging the kingdom of his Son, and making the confession of his name effectual to the salvation of mankind.

The other subject, on which I would speak to you, is the contest about representatives for this county in the next parliament. Let no one be alarmed. I need not, and I do not mean to give you, at a meeting of this nature, my opinion which of the candidates you ought to prefer : of that I say no more here, than that you ought to regard, in the first place, the inseparable interests of the excellent church we are members of, and, its only human support, the just and gracious government we live under ; then other subordinate considerations. My purpose is merely to exhort you, (*and I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation* *,) that on this occasion, *your conversation be such as becometh the gospel of Christ* : in doing which, I have neither one party, nor one person amongst you, more in my view than another : but, if I may use the Apostle's words, *am jealous with a godly jealousy over you all* †. I cannot indeed suppose, that any of you would be guilty of the grosser faults too common at such times, or any wilful wrong behaviour. But in the midst of so many clashings, provocations, and disappointments, as will happen, so many mistakes and misrepresentations as arise, one knows not how ; the incitements to uncharitable and contemptuous thoughts, to unadvised and injurious words, in anger or in mirth, nay, to unkind and hard and even unjust actions, are very great, and the best of us all should be continually suggesting to our minds proper cautions for avoiding these dangers. Else we shall fall into sin against God and our neighbour :

* Heb. xiii. 22.

† 2 Cor. xi. 2.

bour: we shall lose the esteem of part of those whose improvement by us depends on their esteeming us; and set a bad instead of a good example to the rest. Let every one of us therefore be very watchful over our conduct: or, if we have not been so, let us amend it: and if we find preserving our innocence difficult, let us meddle the less with these matters: for indeed, being over busy about them is not very suitable to our function. But, while we are strict with ourselves, let us be very mild in regard to others, whom we think to have done amiss: we may blame them without cause; or if we do not, it is easy to err; and we, amongst others, are sadly liable to faults. But let us be especially mild towards our own brethren. For why should we diminish our little remaining strength by intestine dissensions, and teach yet more persons to think ill or meanly of us, than do already? Surely the common cause of religion and virtue, which we are jointly intrusted to support, should have infinitely greater force to unite us, than any thing else to divide us.

Next to yourselves, you will study to preserve as many of your parishioners as possible, from the sins *that so easily beset them* at these seasons of epidemical unreasonableness and licentiousness. Those, who are of your own side, you may counsel and reprove more freely. With the rest you must be extremely calm and patient: take the most favourable opportunities, and use the most persuasive methods of speaking: but, in some way or other, private or public, all, who need it, should be told, *whether they will hear or whether they will forbear*, that the great Christian laws of dutifulness to superiors, mutual good-will, forbearance, forgiveness, equity, veracity, moderation, sobriety, lose not the least of their obligation during the continuance of these disputes: that all virtues are to be chiefly exercised, when they are chiefly tried: and that therefore, now more particularly, you, as the Apostle directs, must *put them in mind*, and they must keep it in mind, *to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men* *.

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* Titus iii. 1, 2]

I end this long discourse in the words of the same Apostle: *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable, (for so the word is rightly translated in the margin,) whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of and do these things: and the God of peace shall be with you* *.

* Philip. iv. 8, 9.

A CHARGE

A
C H A R G E

DELIVERED TO THE
CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE
OF
C A N T E R B U R Y.

In the Year 1758.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE disposer of all things having permitted his Majesty, by the advice of his faithful servants, to nominate me for your Bishop: though I saw many reasons to dread this promotion, arising from the difficulties of the office and of the times, from the great qualities of my predecessors, and my own increasing weaknesses; yet I thought myself bound to obey his commands, and with the same gratitude for his favourable opinion, as if I had wished to receive them; determining, through God's grace, to perform the duties of my station as well as I could; and hoping for the candor, the assistance and the prayers of good people. To make some amends by diligence for my deficiencies in other respects, I resolved immediately to visit my Diocese: for which purpose we are here assembled.

These meetings were designed, partly to give the clergy opportunities of conferring with each other, and consulting

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their superiors, on matters relating to their professing ; and I am very desirous, that you should render them as beneficial in this way as possible ; but principally, to give Bishops opportunities of exhorting and cautioning their clergy, either on such general subjects as are always useful, or on such particular occasions as the circumstances of things, or the inquiries, made at or against these times, point out ; and of interposing their authority, if there be need ; which, amongst you, I am persuaded, there will not. To provide more fully for your instruction, I have ordered a charge to be sent you, which I delivered to the clergy of Oxfordshire, and printed at their request, about twenty years ago. Would God it were become unseasonable now. But, as unhappily it is not, I earnestly recommend the contents of it to your most serious thoughts ; and would have you look on what I shall at present say further, as supplemental to it.

Counsels and admonitions, to parochial ministers presuppose their residence. The founders of parishes provided them with glebes, and built houses for them, purposely that they might reside. The laws of the church have from the beginning, and do still require, as indeed common equity doth, that this valuable consideration, for which these endowments were given, should be faithfully paid. And going over and performing the service from time to time, or engaging some other clergyman to take care of it, or of the occasional part of it, seldom answers the original intention. Your people will not so readily, and cannot so conveniently, apply to the minister of another parish : And when they do, his assistance, for the most part, will be less early, or less constant, than it should ; though doubtless they, who have undertaken to supply their neighbours absence, ought to do it very conscientiously. But besides, even the Sunday duty, when the incumbent unnecessarily comes from a distant place to do it, will be considered as accompanied with something like a breach of the Sunday, will not always be kept to the stated hours, will often be hurried over indecently : the catechism will either not be taught or not expounded, if the distance be at all considerable ; nor probably will the sermon be well adapted to the audience. For it is only living amongst your people, and knowing them thoroughly, that can show you, what is level to their capacities, and suited to their circumstances ; what
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will reform their faults, and improve their hearts in true goodness. Yet this is your business with them; and unless you perform it, every thing else is nothing. Further, such as want your help most may not come to your sermons, or may not apply them to their own case, or may need to have them enforced by considerations peculiar to themselves, and unfit to be specified in public. Speaking to them separately, and agreeably to their several states of mind and life, may have unforeseen influence. And being always at hand, to awe the disorderly and countenance the well-behaved, to advise and comfort the diseased and afflicted, to relieve or procure relief for the necessitous, to compose little differences and discourage wrong customs in the beginning, to promote friendly offices, and keep up an edifying and entertaining conversation in a neighbourhood, must add incredible weight to public instruction.

Indeed your congregations expect these things from you, and have a right to expect them. The nature of your office requires them: you have all at your ordination expressly promised to *use both public and private monitions and exhortations, both to the sick and whole within your cures, as need shall require and occasion be given, the Lord being your helper.* Now we cannot use them duly, without being resident. But further still, since their ordination, all Vicars have sworn particularly to be resident unless they are dispensed with, which means by lawful authority; nor doth any dispensation of a Bishop last beyond his own time; or beyond the term, for which he gave it; or, if that were indefinite, beyond his pleasure: points, which vicars ought to consider much more seriously than they often do. And every Rector hath sworn in general, to *obey his Bishop in all things lawful and honest.* Now surely residence is lawful and honest; and what is punishable by a Bishop may, if done without his leave, be well interpreted disobedience to him: and the non-residence of rectors is punishable just in the same manner with that of Vicars.

It must not therefore be pleaded, that however necessary the residence of some minister may be, that of a curate may suffice. For your engagement is, not merely that the several duties of your parish shall be done, but that you personally will do them; and if it were enough to substitute another to

do them, a layman would be, in point of reason and conscience, as capable of holding a benefice, as a man in holy orders. Besides, a curate will usually have less knowledge and less experience than the incumbent; and he and the parishioners will conceive, that they are less related to each other. He will consider himself, as being with them only for an uncertain, and, he may hope, a short time; which will tempt him to neglect them. And they will consider him, as not the person, who hath authority over them: which will tempt them to disregard him; especially as the largest salary, that can be legally appointed, or generally afforded to a curate, will not enable him to recommend himself to them by doing good amongst them in any expensive way; whilst yet the people will think, and justly too, that the whole income of the benefice was intended to procure them a minister, to do them as much good in every way, as could reasonably be expected from it.

There are indeed cases, in which the law dispenses with holding two livings, and by consequence allows absence from one. But persons ought to consider well; supposing they can with innocence take the benefit of that law; whether they can do it on other terms, than their dispensation and their bond expresses, of preaching yearly 13 sermons, and keeping two months hospitality, in the parish where they reside least. For the leave given them on these conditions, is not intended to be given them, however legally valid, if the conditions are neglected; always excepting where just impediments happen. There are likewise cases, in which the non-residence of persons, who have only one living, is permitted by law. But some of these also are put under limitations, beyond which the permission doth not reach.

Further still, I am sensible, that considerations of health and strength, and particular circumstances of incumbents or their families, require leave of absence to be sometimes allowed, where the law makes no allowance. But then it should never be taken for any considerable time, without being asked; nor should it be asked without good cause. And mere fancy, or desire of living more at ease, or in a cheerfuller, and, it may be, less clerical manner, is by no means a sufficient cause. Nor indeed is the allegation of health to be urged too far, or be too much regarded. For places, called unwholesome, prove
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upon trial very wholesome to many persons; and those, which are least so, must have some ministers in or near them; and whom rather, generally speaking, than such as enjoy the whole profits? Much less is indulgence to be granted for every present convenience, or prospect of temporal advantage; which if clergymen appear to have greatly at heart, and the care of their parishes but little, indeed it looks very ill.

Another plea may be offered by some, that though they live not on their own cures, they serve others. And it is not always an insufficient one. But, with very few exceptions, the most natural and most useful method by far is, that each take the oversight of the parish, which properly belongs to him; and absenting himself from that, for a little more income, a little more agreeableness, or any slight reason, is unbecoming and unwarrantable behaviour.

At the same time, I acknowledge that the poorness of some benefices makes the residence of a distinct minister upon each of them impracticable; and therefore they must be served from an adjoining parish, or a greater distance; and no more duty expected, than there is a competent provision for. But then I fear, indeed I have found, that in some benefices, not so poor, one minister supplies two churches on a Sunday; contrary to a repeated injunction of successive Archbishops to their Suffragans, which they certainly designed to observe themselves; and the words of which are these; *that you do not allow any minister to serve more than one church or chapel in one day, except that chapel be a member of the parish church; or united thereunto; and unless the said church or chapel be not able to maintain a curate.* The consequence of disregarding this injunction is, not only the very bad one, that the service is performed in irreverent haste, but that catechising is neglected in both places, if not altogether, yet in a great degree. Nay, perhaps for great part of the year, if not the whole, each of them hath prayers but once. Where indeed it can be truly alledged in this last case, that the inhabitants of each parish not only with convenience may, but actually do, attend at both churches, the plea must be allowed its weight. But, as to other excuses: If the number of the people be small, the service is not less enjoined, and is more easily performed: If they had rather have a sermon at another church, than merely prayers
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at their own ; they ought to have more than prayers ; an exposition of the catechism, which they will account equivalent to a sermon ; or you may reduce it with ease into the form of a sermon ; and then many of them will come to their own church, who now go to no other, but profane the rest of the day : If they are content with part of the Sunday service, which however may be said or believed without sufficient ground, yet probably they would be glad of the whole. But supposing them to be indifferent about it, or even averse from it, their minister is bound to show them, that they ought not. And how long soever this hath been the practice ; if it ought not to have been so at all, the longer the worse. My pious and learned predecessor, Archbishop Potter, lamented heavily to me the irregularities of this kind, which he found in this Diocese ; and if any remain, I must, after his example, endeavour to have them rectified.

I hope they will be rectified by the best method, beyond comparison ; your own serious reflections on what you owe to your flocks, and what you owe to the great Shepherd of souls. Though you are ever so expressly permitted by human laws to be absent from your cures, or by your ordinary to serve them, or let them be served, by halves ; you are answerable to an infinitely higher tribunal for what God, and not man alone, hath made your duty. Therefore, if you regard the peace of your own souls and your final comfort, you will never do any of these things, unless very strong reasons oblige you to it ; and you will never be glad of such reasons, but heartily sorry. You will give your parishes both morning and evening prayer, wherever it is possible ; and you will supply them in person, unless particular circumstances render it impracticable, or unless, by living at a distance for the present, you are more useful to religion some other way, and peculiarly qualified for that usefulness. Far from catching at weak pretences, you will be rather diffident about strong inducements ; and much readier to follow the directions, than solicit the indulgence of your superiors. But if any do chuse the worse part, they must remember, that we Bishops are bound to oppose, instead of consulting their inclinations, from concern for them, as well as their parishioners. And therefore you will not surely think it real good-nature to connive at liberties of this kind presumptuously taken without leave,

or to grant requests made for them, as matters of course; nor impute it to a fondness of exercising power, when compliance with the rules of the church is required; nor yet hastily condemn it, as partial behaviour, if an indulgence, denied to one, is granted to another; for there may be, in the cases of different persons, considerable disparities, unknown to you, or unobserved by you.

But when it is ever so clear, that the non-residence of ministers ought to be allowed, it is at least equally clear, that they should use their best endeavours to make their people amends for it. One thing, proper to be done for this end, is relieving their poor: which as they could not with decency avoid doing, according to their ability, if they lived amongst them, they ought to do more largely, if they live elsewhere. For no reproach will lie heavier on our order, than that of reaping all, and sowing nothing; whereas, they who give alms in their absence, will be in effect always present to one valuable purpose; will be readily presumed to be well-wishers to their parishes in every way; whilst they are benefactors to them in this way; and by such a specimen of the influence of religion upon themselves, will remind their congregations, very acceptably, of the influence which it ought to have upon them; especially if they make their charity more directly subservient to religion, by affording distinguished encouragement to pious and virtuous persons, and those who appear likely to be made such; by procuring children to be instructed in their Christian duty, and other proper knowledge; by distributing useful books amongst the needy and ignorant. What is thus bestowed, is of all the service it can be: whereas injudicious bounty may even produce harm.

Another thing, incumbent on such as cannot reside constantly, is to inspect, however, the state of their parishes as frequently as they can: spending days, or weeks, or longer seasons there occasionally; and in proportion as their time is shorter, using more diligence in public and private instructions and warnings. For they are peculiarly bound to do what they are able, who are not able to do what else they ought. But if even this be out of their power, they may at least be assiduous in getting informations from persons of understanding and seriousness, in or near their cures, with what regularity, with what spirit and zeal, each part of the parochial duty is performed;

performed; whether true inward piety makes any progress; whether any or what abuses and neglects are crept in. And he, who reckons it enough, that, for aught he knows to the contrary, his parishoners go on like their neighbours, hath by no means the requisite concern for their souls, or his own.

But wherever absence is necessary, or the largeness of a parish, or the infirmity of a minister, hinders him from taking the whole care of it personally, the principal point is, the choice of a fit substitute, to be employed in his stead, or share his stead, or share his burthen: for no superintendency will make an unfit one answer the end. And therefore I charge it upon your consciences, not to suffer cheapness, recommendations of friends, affection to this or that person or place of education, in short, any inducement whatever, to weigh near so much with you, as the benefit of your people, in chusing persons to serve your churches. For on you the choice of them lies in the first place: but not on you alone. The laws of the church require, particularly Can. 48. that *no curate or minister be permitted to serve in any place, without examination and admission of the ordinary*: in consequence of which, one of the before-mentioned archiepiscopal directions to the suffragans of the province, is this: *That you make diligent inquiry concerning Curates in your Diocese: and proceed to ecclesiastical censures against those, who shall presume to serve Cures, without being first duly licensed thereunto; as also against all Incumbents, who shall receive and employ them without obtaining such licence.* Yet I would avoid rigour in all cases. The expence of a licence, by means of the stamps, may to some be rather inconvenient, and greater than the government perhaps intended: at least, if they are likely to remove, and so repeat that expence, in a short time. And such curates I would excuse; only desiring them to consider, what security of continuing in their station, and receiving their salary, a licence brings them. But then you cannot think it right, that I should be left in ignorance, who serves a church under my care, till I learn it by accident, or private inquiry, perhaps many months after; thro' which omission, men of bad characters, men not in orders, may intrude; as there hath lately been a fragrant instance in this diocese. I am far from looking on the past failures of giving notice, as designed negligence of your flocks, or disrespect to your superiors. But I shall

shall have cause both to think of them and treat them as such, if continued after the warning, which I now give, that no one is to officiate statedly, or employ another to officiate so, within my jurisdiction, unless he first obtain my consent; or what in effect will be mine, that of your very worthy and vigilant Archdeacon. Think not, I beg you, that this is taking more on myself, than my predecessors did. Their own directions prove, that they would have done the same thing, if they had seen the same necessity. Far be it from me to *lord it over God's heritage**, but I am bound to *keep that which is committed to my trust*†.

When you want Curates, I recommend it to you, first to inquire after persons of merit, already ordained, and if possible ordained priests, taking care to see their orders, as well as to examine into their characters, before you think of granting nominations to others. The number of clergymen indeed is rather deficient, than superfluous. But still one would not add to it by overlooking undeservedly those who are of it already. And particularly where help is wanted only for a short time, I shall insist on this point: nor will, without absolute necessity, ordain any one upon such a title. And if fraudulent titles are brought, merely to procure orders, as I hope I shall discover them soon enough to disallow them, so I shall be sure to remark and remember, who hath attempted to impose upon me by them.

The next thing to be considered in relation to Curates is, their testimonials. And here the canon and directions already quoted enjoin, that no Bishop *admit such as remove out of another Diocese to serve in his, without the testimony in writing of the Bishop of that Diocese, or ordinary of the peculiar jurisdiction, from whence they come, of their good life, ability, and conformity to the ecclesiastical laws of the Church of England.* For the clergymen of one Diocese, or jurisdiction, at least their hand-writing being usually unknown to the Bishop of another, he can seldom, of himself, be sure, either that he hath their genuine testimony, or how far he may trust it. Therefore it is fit, that he should desire the attestation of their proper superior. And even to this it will be prudent to add such further information as can be got: considering how very carelessly

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* 1 Pet. v. 3.

† 1 Tim. vi. 20.

testimonials are sometimes granted, even by reputable persons.

But let me intreat you never to be guilty of such carelessness yourselves, for whatever purpose one is asked of you. Both the nature of the thing, and the directions repeatedly mentioned, require, that no Bishop *accept any letters testimonial, unless it be declared by those who shall sign them, that they have personally known, not only the man, but his life and conversation, for the time by them certified; and do believe in their conscience, that he is qualified for that order, office or employment, which he desires.* Now testimonials, concerning such things as these, cannot be matter of mere form, unless our whole profession be a very empty form. We, the Bishops to whom they are given, do not, and must not, understand them to be so: it would be absurd to demand them if we did. Some customs indeed may grow to be things of course: the reasons for them ceasing, or not being thought of moment; and yet the law for them continuing. But the reasons for testimonials can never cease, or be thought of small moment. They are the only ordinary information that we have, in a case of the utmost importance, in which we have a right to be informed. For no one can imagine, that we are to ordain and employ whoever comes, or depend on clandestine intelligence. We must therefore, and do depend on regular testimonials. And if they be untrue, we are most injuriously deceived by them: and all the mischiefs, that follow from thence, will sit heavy one day on the deceivers. But, even exclusively of this great consideration, would you be chargeable with declaring a deliberate falsehood under your hand? Would you have unworthy men fill ecclesiastical stations, and exclude their betters? Would you have your Bishop reproached, and your order vilified, through your fault? If not; remember how utterly inconsistent with all concern for religion, with all veracity, probity, and prudence it is, to sign testimonials at random; how lamentable a sort of clergy it will produce; how dreadful an encouragement to wickedness and profaneness it will prove. Remember also, that you express in these instruments, not what you charitably hope a person will be; but what you actually know he hath been: not what others tell you at the end of the time, for which you vouch; but what you have seen and heard through the course of it: so that, if for a considerable part of
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The three years, commonly specified, you have seen and heard nothing of him, for that part you can certify nothing about him. And remember, lastly, that though the affirmation of a person's having lived piously, soberly and honestly, comprehends a great deal, yet the concluding article, your belief of his fitness for what he desires, implies a great deal more. For let him be ever so good, and even learned a man, he cannot be fit for a clergyman, and the care of a parish, without competent gravity and discretion, and a voice and a manner suitable to a public assembly: of all which things they, that have had some familiarity with him, are usually the best, if not the only judges. This part of the testimonial therefore is highly necessary: and every part of it must be well considered, before it is given; and no regard paid to neighbourhood, acquaintance, friendship, compassion, importunity, when they stand in competition with truth.

It may sometimes be hard for you to refuse your hand to improper persons. But it is only one of the many hardships, which conscience bids men undergo resolutely, when they are called to them. It would be much harder, that your Bishop should be misled, the Church of God injured, and the poor wretch himself assisted to invade sacrilegiously an office, at the thought of which he hath cause to tremble. And if you fear he will be revenged on you for not yielding to him, this furnishes an additional reason for denying him; for will you, or can you, say of such a one, that he is qualified to be a minister of the gospel any where? But if the persons, to whom candidates apply, would only make it a rule to meet, and act jointly on the occasion, and keep secret the particulars of what passed, it might be unknown, from whom the denial proceeded. Or suppose it known, the resentment of such, as deserve to be refused, will seldom do a worthy man much hurt; and a number of such refusals will do the public unspeakable good. Indeed the expectation of a refusal's following upon wrong behaviour will in a great degree prevent such behaviour, and turn this whole difficulty into a pleasure. But what is unavoidable with innocence, must be virtuously borne; and instead of submitting to recommend unfit persons, you ought, if others recommend them, which God forbid, to interpose immediate cautions against the danger, in all flagrant cases. Still, not every past fault, nor every present infirmity, should be
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alleged, or allowed, as an impediment. But into an office, the most important of all others, none should be admitted, who are void of the proper Spirit, or a competent share of the needful qualifications for it: and the less, because, though we can refuse to ordain them, we often cannot keep them back from very unsuitable stations, when once they are ordained.

After presenting the title and testimonials, whether for orders, a curacy, or a living, follows the examination. For though the testimonial expresses an opinion, that the person is qualified; which may be very useful, to restrain such from applying as are notoriously unqualified; yet we Bishops must not, especially in the case of orders, rest on a mere opinion; but assure ourselves by a closer trial, whether he hath sufficient knowledge of religion and the holy scriptures to teach them in public, and apply them in private, and defend them against opposers: the two first of which are absolutely necessary: the third, highly requisite. As therefore, on the one hand, I hope I never have been or shall be over strict in this respect, and rejecting candidates will give me almost, if not quite, as much concern, as it can give them: so, on the other, I must adhere to my duty, against all sollicitation of friends, and all intreaties of the parties concerned, who little think what they do, when they press into such an employment prematurely. I show my regard to you, when I exclude unqualified persons out of your number: and I shall never doubt your candid interpretation of my conduct; nor indeed your zeal to vindicate it, when you are acquainted with my reasons, which any of you shall, who hath cause to ask them. But that no injustice may be done to those whom I postpone, any more than to myself: I beseech you to consider, and, if needful, to say in their behalf, that though deficient in knowledge, they may have a goodness of heart, more valuable than the highest knowledge: though not qualified yet, they may be soon; may already have made a good progress, though not a sufficient one; may indeed have more learning on the whole, than many who are admitted, only not have applied themselves enough to theological learning.

Examination must occasionally be repeated after persons have been ordained. The 39th canon requires it before institution to benefices: therefore surely it is advisable also before

fore admission to curacies. A man, who was fit to be ordained, may yet have become since, through negligence, or bodily indisposition affecting his mind, unfit to be employed: or he may be capable still of what he was ordained for, but not of what he applies for: or his ordainer, though ever so duly careful, may sometimes have mistaken, or been misinformed; and if he hath chanced to be too indulgent, the bad effects of his indulgence ought to be prevented. Accordingly re-examination is common. My brethren the bishops, I am sure, will not blame me for using it: and I trust you, my brethren, will not.

When a curate nominated hath been examined and approved, the next step is, to appoint him a salary. And here I am very sensible, that what is far from a comfortable maintenance for life, may however be a tolerable competency at first; and likewise, that some benefices are so mean, and some incumbents in such low circumstances, or burthened with so numerous families, that they must be excused, if they endeavour to get help on as easy terms as they well can. But if any minister, who hath either a large preferment, or two moderate ones, or a plentiful temporal income, tries to make a hard bargain with his brother, whom he employs; and is more solicitous to give the smallest salary possible, than to find the worthiest person; it is matter of severe and just reproach; the friends of the clergy will be scandalized at it; their enemies will take dreadful advantages of it; indeed the people in general, if we think a trifle enough for him that doth the work, will be apt to conceive it very needless, that he, who doth little or nothing, should have a great deal more. For this reason therefore, amongst incomparably weightier ones, it concerns you much, both to labour diligently, and to allow liberally. Accordingly, I hope I shall never have the disagreeable office thrown upon me of augmenting what is proposed, but the satisfaction given me of confirming and applauding it.

But besides making a reasonable allowance, the minister of a parish ought to provide, with the kindest attention in all respects, for the convenience and accommodation, the credit and influence, of his curate; who is bound in return to consult faithfully the minister's honour and interest in every thing; but above all, to be unwearied in that best proof of his gratitude,

titude, a conscientious care of the souls committed to him; not proportioning his diligence to the poor recompence paid him here, but to the unspeakable happiness reserved for good shepherds hereafter.

Indeed, whether the principal, or his representative, or both, reside, their industry and fervency and prudence will be the measure of their people's benefit, and their own final acceptance. If you content yourselves with a languid formal recital of stated offices, and by indolence, or amusements, or business, or even studies, are lost to your parishioners, while you are in the midst of them, or by indiscretions in conversation, dress, or demeanour, become disliked or despised by them, you may, in respect of any spiritual usefulness to them or yourselves, be, almost as well, perhaps better, ever so far off. But this is no excuse for being absent, but only a reason for being present to good purpose. And as the non-residence of some, the unactive residence of others, and the offensive conduct of a third sort, (which cause great sorrow, but moderate complaints amongst wise and good people,) are favourite topics of invective against us, not only in the mouths of irreligious persons, but of a new sect pretending to the strictest piety; though we are bound always, we are peculiarly bound at present, to behave in so exemplary a manner, as will *cut off occasion from them which desire occasion to glory* * of themselves, and speak evil of us. It is not *rendering* to them *railing for railing* †; it is not ridiculing them, especially in terms bordering on profaneness, or affecting more gravely to hold them in contempt; it is not doing them the honour of miscalling other persons of more than ordinary seriousness by their name, that will prevent the continuance or the increase of the harm which they are doing. The only way is, for the clergy to imitate and emulate what is good in them, avoiding what is bad; to attend their cures, edify their parishioners with awakening, but rational and scriptural discourses, converse much with them, as *watchmen for their souls* ‡, be *sober, grave, temperate, and shew themselves in all things patterns of good works* §. If the people see, or but imagine, their minister unwilling to take more pains about them, or preserve more guard

* 2 Cor. xi. 12.

† 1 Pet. iii. 9.

‡ Heb. xiii. 17.

§ Tit. ii. 2, 7.

guard upon himself than for shame he must, no wonder if it alienates them powerfully both from him and his doctrine: whereas when they perceive him careful to instruct them, and go before them, in whatever is their duty to do, they will hearken to him with great regard, when he cautions them against overdoing; and be unlikely to seek for imaginary improvements abroad from irregularities and extravagancies, whilst they experience themselves really improved at home in an orderly established method.

But then, to improve them effectually to their future happiness, as well as to silence false accusers, you must be assiduous in teaching the principles, not only of virtue and natural religion, but of the gospel: and of the gospel, not as almost explained away by modern refiners, but *as the truth is in Jesus* *; as it is taught in the church, of which you are members; as you have engaged, by your subscriptions and declarations, that you will teach it yourselves. You must preach to them faith in the ever-blessed trinity; and vindicate, when it is requisite, those parts of our creeds and offices which relate to that article, from the very unjust imputations of absurdity and uncharitableness which have been cast upon them. You must set forth the original corruption of our nature; our redemption, *according to God's eternal purpose in Christ* †, by the sacrifice of the cross; our sanctification by the influences of the Divine Spirit; the insufficiency of our own good works, and the efficacy of faith to salvation: yet handling these points in a doctrinal, not controversial manner, unless particularly called to it; and even then treating adversaries with mildness and pity, not with bitterness or immoderate vehemence.

The truth, I fear, is, that many, if not most of us, have dwelt too little on these doctrines in our sermons: by no means, in general, from disbelieving or slighting them; but partly from knowing, that formerly they had been inculcated beyond their proportion, and even to the disparagement of Christian obedience; partly from fancying them so generally received and remembered, that little needs to be said, but on social obligations; partly again from not having studied theology deeply enough, to treat of them ably and beneficially:

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* Eph. iv. 21.

† Eph. iii. 11.

God grant it may never have been for want of inwardly experiencing their importance. But whatever be the cause, the effect hath been lamentable. Our people have grown less and less mindful, first of the distinguishing articles of their creed, then, as will always be the case, of that one, which they hold in common with the Heathens; have forgot, in effect, their Creator, as well as their Redeemer and Sanctifier; seldom or never worshipping him, or thinking of the state of their souls in relation to him; but flattering themselves, that what they are pleased to call a moral and harmless life, though far from being either, is the *one thing needful*. Reflections have been made upon us, of different natures, and with different views, on account of these things, by deists, by papists, by brethren of our own, which, it is easy to show, have been much too severe. But the only complete vindication of ourselves will be, to preach fully and frequently the doctrines which we are unjustly accused of casting off or undervaluing: yet so, as to reserve always a due share of our discourses, which, it is generally reported, some of our censures do not, for the common duties of common life, as did our Saviour and his apostles. But then, we must enforce them chiefly by motives peculiarly Christian: I will not say, only by such; for the scripture adds others. And while we urge on our hearers the necessity of universal holiness, we must urge equally that of their *being found in Christ; not having their own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith* *.

Copious and interesting as the subject is, I must now conclude. And *I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation* †: for I have spoken to you from the simplicity of a plain heart, and the sincerity of a deep concern for the interests of the church of Christ, and the everlasting welfare of every one of you; not as condemning, not as disesteeming you, very far from it, but as being *jealous over you with godly jealousy*, and deeply affected with the present state of religion amongst us. Wickedness, profaneness, avowed infidelity, have made a dreadful progress in this nation. The civil power, in most cases, doth little to check that progress: and it is an unhappiness in our most happy constitution, that it cannot easily, if at all, do
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* Phil. iii. 9.

† Heb. xiii. 22.

what one might wish. Ecclesiastical authority is not only too much limited, but too much despised, as matters now stand amongst us, to do almost any thing to purpose. In the small degree, that it can be exerted usefully I hope it will, and promise my utmost endeavours, in all cases notified to me, that it shall. But the main support of piety and morals consists in the parochial labours of the clergy. If our country is to be preserved from utter profligateness and ruin, it must be by our means: and, take notice, we cannot lose our influence, but in a great measure by our own fault. If we look on what we are apt to call our livings only as our livelihoods, and think of little more than living on the income of them according to our own inclinations; if, for want of a *good conscience, or faith unfeigned**, we forfeit the protection of God; and by worldliness, or indolence, or levity in behaviour, talk, or appearance, (for gross vices I put out of the question) lose, as we assuredly shall, the reverence of mankind: there will be no foundation left for us to stand upon. Our legal establishment will shake and sink under us, if once it can be said we do the public little service; and much sooner if we are suspected of disquieting it. Wicked people will attack us without reserve; the good will be forced to condemn and give us up: and well would it be for us, if this were the worst. *It is a small thing to be judged of man's judgement: he that judgeth us is the Lord*†. But while we teach the genuine truths of the gospel, and evidently feel the truths we teach; and are more anxious about the souls of men, than our own profit, or pleasure, or power; while we submit ourselves dutifully and affectionately (as we never had greater cause) to the King and those who are put in authority under him: *lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty*‡; and join to our piety and loyalty and virtue, but a common share of prudence: we shall, in spite of enemies, through his mercy, who hath promised to be *with us alway*||, not fail of being upheld. The religious will *esteem us very highly in love for our work's sake*§: the *wise in their generation*¶, though not religious, will perceive our importance: the vicious and destitute of principle will be awed by us; and the seed of the word, however tram-

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* 1 Tim. i. 5.

† 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 2.

|| Mat. xxviii.

§ 1 Thess. v. 13.

¶ Luke xvi. 8.

pled under foot by some, will spring up and bear fruit in the hearts of many. Let us think then seriously, what depends us, what it requires of us, *and give ourselves wholly to it* *. God hath placed us in a station of difficulty and labour, at present also of reproach and contempt from great numbers of men. But still, if we only learn to value our function justly, and love it sincerely, we shall be unspeakably happier in discharging the duties of it, than we possibly can be in any thing else. The things in which the world places happiness, are very trifles. We may plainly see them to be such now, if we will; and we shall see in a little time, whether we will or not, that the only real point of moment is, to have approved ourselves *good and faithful servants* † to our great Master. Let us all therefore bear in mind continually, how matters will appear to us then; and heartily pray and earnestly endeavour, *so to pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal, Grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our Lord* ‡.

* 1 Tim. iv. 15. † Mat. xxv. 21. ‡ Col. 4th Sunday after Trinity.

A
C H A R G E

DISTRIBUTED TO THE
CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE
OF
C A N T E R B U R Y.

In the Year 1762,

The ARCHBISHOP being hindered by Illness from
Visiting them in Person.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

IT having pleased God that I should live to come amongst you a second time, I think it my duty to proceed with the same kind of exhortations, which I gave you at first. For though many subjects of instruction might be proper, there is a peculiar propriety in those, which relate more immediately to your conduct: and though I might very justly give you, in general, praise instead of advice, yet they who deserve the most of the former, will be most desirous of the latter, knowing how much need of it the best of us have. And I hope the freedoms which I shall take with you in this respect, will the rather be pardoned, as I both permit and intreat you to use the same with me, when occasion requires it; being sin-

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cerely

cerely disposed, if I know myself, to set you an example of docility.

I began with your obligation to residence; and the appointment of curates, either to supply your absence when you could not reside, or to assist you when the work was too heavy for you. And then I entered a little into the common duties of incumbents and curates, in which I shall now make some further progress: more solicitous about the importance of directions, than the accuracy of method; and using no other apology, if I should happen to repeat what I have given you in charge already, than that of the apostle: *To say the same things, to me is not grievous, and for you it is safe* *.

The same apostle's admonition to Timothy is, *Take heed unto thyself, and to thy doctrine* †. The main point is what he begins with, the care of our temper and behaviour. For without that, our preaching will seldom be such as it ought, and scarce ever bring forth its proper fruits. Now, a Christian temper consists of various parts; but the first impression, which a genuine faith in the gospel makes on the soul, and the ruling principle, which it fixes there, is a deep sense of love to God and our fellow-creatures, producing an earnest desire, that we and they may be for ever happy in his presence. Whoever therefore is destitute of this feeling, ought not, though free from gross vices, to become a clergyman: and without obtaining it from the giver of all good things by fervent prayer, no man is qualified to fill the place of one. For notwithstanding that he may preserve some *form of godliness*, without which he would be mischievous and shocking in the highest degree: yet, not having the reality and *power thereof* ‡, he must profess, and seemingly attempt, to make others what he is far from being himself. Consequently his endeavours out of the pulpit will be infrequent, reluctant, faint: and in it they will at best be unnatural and ungraceful, whatever pains he may take in his compositions, or whatever vehemence he may affect in his delivery. Hence he will be dissatisfied within, detected and disesteemed by the judicious part of his hearers, and of little use to the rest, if he is not even hurtful by misleading them. Or whatever his case may be amongst men, his inward want of the piety, which he outwardly pretends to, must render him

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* Phil. iii. 1.

† 1 Tim. iv. 16.

‡ 2 Tim. iii. 5.

uncommonly guilty in the sight of God. Heaven forbid, that I should have need to enlarge on such a character in this audience.

But have we not most of us cause to apprehend, that our religious principles, though sincere, are not sufficiently exerted; and therefore produce not the fruit, which they might? Do we not rather take it for granted, that we approve ourselves to be duly in earnest, than find, on impartial examination that we do? No man should rashly say or surmise this of another; but every one should search home into it for himself. And we should attentively read the scriptures, and the treatises written by wise and good men concerning the duties of God's ministers; to see if we are such as they describe, and stir up ourselves to become such as we ought.

Good inclinations, thus excited, will not fail, through the assistance of divine grace, of directing us into a suitable conduct. And were a man, who confessedly means well, to overdo a little sometimes, the rightness of his intention would plead his excuse very strongly. However we should carefully avoid extremes, even on the better side: not give uncommanded demonstrations of our Christian zeal, when they will probably serve no good purpose, and be deemed ostentation, or turned into ridicule, or provoke ill humour; but restrain, according as times and places and company may require, the sentiments which else we could be glad to utter. Only we must do this in such a manner, as not to tempt the most rigid professor of religion to imagine, or the most profligate enemy of it to suggest, that we have little or none: but show our concern for it on every fit occasion, with full as much diligence, as we decline unfit ones. And here, I conceive, it is, that we of the clergy are chiefly apt to fail. We do not always appear in the common intercourses of life, sufficiently penetrated with the importance of our function, or sufficiently assiduous to promote the ends of our mission.

Too possibly a great part of our people may like the lukewarm amongst us the better for resembling themselves, and giving them no uneasiness on comparison, but seeming to authorise their indifference. But then, such of us can do them no good. Our example can teach them nothing beyond a little decent regularity, in which they will fancy they need not quite

quite come up to us either. Our sermons, and reading of prayers, they will consider only as matters of form; and finding in us hardly any thing at other times, of what we express at these, they will presume, that our inward regard to it is not very great, and that they are not bound to have more. Therefore if they are pleased with us, if they esteem us, while they continue to be of this turn, it must be for something foreign from our office, something of a middle, or it may be a blameable nature, not as teachers of the gospel: a character which they take us to lay aside as much as we well can. And so the better they think of us, the more lightly they will think of our ministry; till at length they join with those avowed infidels, who boldly affirm, though often against their own consciences, that we believe not what we preach, else it would have more influence upon us.

Then, at the same time, the right dispositions of well inclined persons will languish and decay, for want of that countenance and assistance in serious piety, which they should receive from their pastors. For if the tokens of our piety be confined to the church, they will be of little service either out of it, or in it. Or if some good people suffer no harm themselves from our defects, they will see with great sorrow, that others do; all of them will be much readier to think the clerical order in general careless and light, if those are so of whom they see most: their ears will be open to the invectives, which artful or heated men are daily pouring forth against us; they will easily be led to undervalue and misconstrue the best instructions of those, with whom they are disgusted; and run after any teachers, who have the powerful recommendation, for it will always, and no wonder, be a very powerful one, of seeming more in earnest. The irregularities and divisions which have prevailed so lamentably in our church of late, are greatly owing to an opinion, that we are usually indifferent about vital inward religion. It is true, the spreaders of this imputation, which hath been monstrously exaggerated, will have much to answer for: but so shall we also, unless we take the only way to silence it, by cutting off hereafter all occasion for it.

Now, the first necessary step to seem good is to be so; for mere pretence will be seen through; and the next is, to *let your light*

*light shine before men**, in the faithful and laborious exercise of your function. Living amongst your parishioners, or as near them as may be: inquiring frequently and personally concerning the welfare and behaviour of those, with whom you cannot be statedly present; reverent and judicious reading of the prayers and lessons in your churches, instructive and affecting sermons delivered with discreet warmth, readiness to take extraordinary pains for the occasional assistance of your brethren, diligence in forming the youth to a sense of their Christian duty, in bringing your people to the holy communion, and where it can be, to week-day prayers: all these things will tend very much both to your usefulness and your credit. Relieving or obtaining relief for such as are distressed in their circumstances: hearing your people willingly and patiently, though perhaps low in rank or weak in understanding, when they would consult you upon any difficulty, and answering them with consideration and tenderness: disposing them to be visited when sick, praying by them with fervency, exhorting and comforting them with fidelity, compassion and prudence; and reminding them strongly, yet mildly, after their recovery, of their good thoughts and purposes during their illness; will be further proofs, very beneficial and very engaging ones, of your seriousness: which however you must complete by going through every other office of religion with dignity. I will specify two.

One is that of baptism: which, especially when administered in private houses without necessity, is too often treated, even during the administration, rather as an idle ceremony than a Christian sacrament: or however that be, is commonly close followed by very unsuitable, if not otherwise also indecent, levity and jollity. Now in these circumstances it is highly requisite, that the minister should, by a due mixture of gravity and judgment, support the solemnity of the ordinance; and either prevent improprieties in the sequel, or if it be doubtful whether he can, excuse himself, with a civil intimation of the unsuitness of them, from being present. The other instance is; that of saying grace over our daily food: which many, if not most, of the laity have, with a profaneness more than heathenish, laid aside: and I am sorry to add, that some
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* Matth. v. 16.

of the clergy hurry it over so irreverently, in a mutter or a whisper, scarce, if at all, intelligible, that one might question, whether they had not better lay it aside too, which yet God forbid, than make it thus insignificant; and expose to contempt an act of devotion, and themselves along with it, as doing what they are ashamed of.

Indeed, far from authorizing any slights of this sort by our example, and as it were our consent, we must, through our whole conversation, steadily and resolutely, though with mildness and modesty, always keep up the honour of religion and our order, which is inseparable from our own: never speak a word, or use a gesture, which can with the least colour be interpreted, as if we had small regard to our profession, or exercised it chiefly for a maintenance: never repeat, never hear, discourses of an irreligious or immoral turn, without expressing a plain disapprobation, briefly or at large, as the case may require: yet be on all occasions courteous, and on proper occasions cheerful; but let it be evidently the cheerfulness of serious men. *Foolish talking and jesting are not convenient* *, not becoming any person: but those least of all, who should know best, that *every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof*, according to its tendency, *in the day of judgment* †. Unseasonable or excessive mirth sits peculiarly ill upon him whose office must or ought to bring before his mind so frequently, the afflictions of this mortal state, the holiness of God's law, his own grievous imperfections, the deplorable sins of many others, and the final sentence, that awaits us all. Doubtless we should endeavour to make religion agreeable; but not to make ourselves agreeable, by leading our company to forget religion. We should *every one of us please his neighbour for his good* ‡: but not so please men, as to fail in the character of *servants of Christ* §. We should be made, in a fitting sense and measure, *all things to all men, that we may by all means save some* ||: but we shall lose ourselves, not save others, if we are quite different persons in the pulpit and out of it: nor can we act a more incongruous part, than to chuse raising and promoting the laugh for our province in conversation, instead of duly restraining our own liveliness

† Eph. v. 4.

† Matth. xii. 36.

‡ Rom. xv. 2.

§ Gal. i. 10.

|| 1 Cor. ix. 22.

linefs and that of others. *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh**: and our hearts ought to abound with better things. I own, both affected and exceffive restraint will do harm. But if we are fincerely pious, and endeavour to be prudent, we fhall combine ufeul informations and reflections with harmlefs entertainment: our *speech will be with grace, feafoned with falt, that we may know how we ought to answer every man*†: we fhall prove that we have the end of our miniftry constantly in view, by drawing profitable leffons, frequently, but naturally, out of topics of indifference; and bringing back the difcourfe, if it goes aftray, from exceptionable or unfafe fubjects, to innocent ones; yet if poffible without offenfive reproof, and perhaps imperceptibly. *For the fervants of the Lord muft not ftrive*, that is, roughly and harfhly, *but be gentle unto all men*‡, even the worft. Yet, on the other hand, fervile obfequiousnefs, or *flattering words*§, even to the beft, are far remote from *having our converfation in fimplicity and godly fincerity*||.

Talking with great earneftnefs about worldly affairs, or with great delight about diverfions and trifles, betrays a mind over-much fet upon them: and numbers will represent the cafe as worfe than it is. Nay, our being only in a very peculiar degree good judges of fuch matters, or of any that are unconnected with our office, will, unlefs we have fome efpecial call to them, be commonly thought to imply, that we have ftudied and love them beyond what we ought, to the neglect of our proper bufinefs. For we are not to expect very favourable conftructions from mankind: yet it greatly imports us to have their good opinion; which we fhall not fecure, unlefs, in whatever other lights they may fee us occasionally, the worthy clergyman be the predominant part of our character. If practical Chriftian piety and benevolence and felf government, with conftant zeal to promote them all upon earth, are not the firft and chief qualities, which your parifhioners and acquaintance will afcribe to you; if they will fpeak of you, as noted on other accounts, but pafs over thefe articles; and when asked about them, be at a lofs what to fay, excepting poffibly that they know no harm of you; all is not

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* Matth. xii. 34.

† Col. iv. 6.

‡ 2 Tim. ii. 24.

§ 1 Theff. ii. 5.

|| 2 Cor. i. 12.

right: nor can such a clergy answer the design of its institution any where; or even maintain its ground in a country of freedom and learning, though a yet worse may in the midst of slavery and ignorance.

Actually sharing in the gaieties and amusements of the world will provoke censure still more, than making them favourite subjects of discourse. I do not say, that recreations, lawful in themselves, are unlawful to us: or that those which have been formerly prohibited by ecclesiastical rules, merely as disreputable, may not cease to be so by change of custom. But *still not all things lawful are expedient**, and certainly these things, further than they are in truth requisite for health of body, refreshment of mind, or some really valuable purpose, are all a misemployment of our leisure hours, which we ought to set our people a pattern of filling up well. A minister of God's word, attentive to his duty, will neither have leisure for such dissipations, public or domestic, nor liking to them. He will see, that pleasure, or rather a wretched affectation of it, is become the idol of mankind; to which they are sacrificing their fortunes, their families, their healths, their reputations, their regard to God, to their social duties, to the state of their souls, to their future being. Now what are the clergy to do in this case? If we but seem to go along with them, who shall call them back? For as to the pretence of keeping them within bounds by our presence, it is visibly a mere pretence. Or were it not, the older and graver of us would surely think such a superintendency no very honourable one: and few of the younger and livelier could be safely trusted with it. Indeed we none of us know, into what improprieties of behaviour, at least what wrongness of disposition we may be drawn by the *evil communications* of these assemblies: whether, if happily they should not otherwise *corrupt* our *good manners*†, we may not however grow inwardly fond of them; come to think our profession a dull one, and the calls of it troublesome; throw off as much of the burthen as we can, and perform with reluctance and cold formality the remainder, which we must.

At least it will be suspected, that we cannot greatly disapprove the customs in which we voluntarily join, the persons

with

* 1 Cor. vi. 12.

† 1 Cor. xv. 33.

with whom we familiarly associate, or indeed any thing said or done where we delight to be: that if we do not go the utmost lengths, yet we should, if for shame we durst: for these things are our choice, not the duties of our ministry; which therefore declaimers will say we are not sincere in, or, however, unfit for. And even they, who plead our example as a precedent for themselves, will usually honour us much the less for setting it.

Still I do not mean, that we should be sour and morose; condemn innocent relaxations, and provoke men to say, that we rail out of envy at what we have absurdly tied up ourselves from partaking of: but express our dislike of them as mildly as the case will bear; slight with good humour the indulgences, in which others falsely place their happiness; and convince them by our experience as well as reasoning, how very comfortably they may live without them. It is true, paying court to the gay and inconsiderate by imitation of them, may often be the shorter, and sometimes the surer way to their favour. But the favour of the fashionable world is not our aim: if it be, we have chosen our profession very unwisely. And though we should succeed thus with such persons in point of interest, we must not hope even for their esteem. For they will both think and speak with the lowest contempt of the complying wretch, whom yet for their own convenience or humour they will caress, and now and then prefer.

Our predecessors, that their abstaining from indiscreet levities might be notorious, wore constantly the peculiar habit of their order. And certainly we should be more respected, if we followed their example in this more universally. They complained of no inconveniencies from it: nor did I ever, in a course of many years, find any worth naming. In the primitive and persecuting times indeed clergymen wore no peculiar dress: and long after were distinguished only by retaining a greater simplicity of garb than others. But gradually superiors discerned reasons for enjoining a different sort: and surely others may well pay them so far the obedience promised to them, as always to show, by some evident and proper marks, (for nothing more is expected) of what class of men they are. If you do not, it will be said, either that you are ashamed of your cause, or conscious of your unskilfulness

to defend it, or that you conceal yourselves to take occasionally unfit liberties. Indeed some external restraints of this kind, merely as an admonition against unseemly discourse and conduct and company, would, though not prescribed, be very advisable for young clergymen: among whom they, who dislike them the most, might sometimes perceive, that they have the most need of them. And we that are older, should keep up the custom for their sakes, though unnecessary for our own. Besides, we may all prevent, by such notification of ourselves, a great deal of unbecoming talk and deportment in others: and so escape both the disagreeableness of reproving it, and the impropriety of not reproving it. Or if after all it cannot be prevented, they who are offended with it, will immediately see in us a refuge from it.

But then a habit, visibly a clergyman's, must be such in every part as befits a clergyman; have no look of effeminacy or love of finery in it*. For we had better put on the lay dress intirely, than disgrace the clerical one. And it is doubly contemptible, first to show what a fondness we have for things utterly beneath us, and then how poorly we are able to indulge it. Therefore let us be uniform: and as our character is a truly venerable one, let us think we do ourselves honour by wearing the ancient badges of it. I need not add, that our whole demeanour should be answerable to our cloathing: that softness and delicacy of manner, skill in the science of eating†, and the perfection of liquors, in short, every approach to luxurious gratification, is strangely out of place in one, who hath devoted himself to *endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ* ‡.

Still we ought to judge very charitably of those, who take greater liberties than we dare: never blame them more, seldom so much, as they deserve; and confine our severity to our own practice. Only we must watch with moderate strictness over our families also: not only keeping up the joint and separate worship of God in them, which I hope no clergyman omits, but forming them to every part of piety and virtue and prudence. St Paul requires, that not only *Deacons*, but their *wives* be grave||: and that the higher clergy be such, as *rule well their own houses, having their children in subjection with*
all

* Hieron. ad Nepotian. § 9.

† Hieron. ad Nepotian. § 6.

‡ 2 Tim. ii. 3.

|| 1 Tim. iii. 8, 11.

all gravity: for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?* Whence we have all promised at our ordination, to *frame and fashion our families, together with ourselves, according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make them, as much as in us lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to his flock.* They are naturally the first objects of our care: we have peculiar opportunities of instructing and restraining them. If we neglect them, we shall never be thought to have much concern for others: if we are unsuccessful with them, we shall be deemed very unskilful; and bid to look at home before we reprove the rest of our flock. But exhibiting instances of goodness and happiness, produced under our own roofs, by the methods to which we direct those around us, must needs add singular weight to our exhortations.

For the importance of the rules hitherto laid down, we have the judgment of a most able and subtle and determined enemy, the Emperor Julian: who, designing to re-establish paganism, and accounting, as he declares, the strictness and sanctity, professed by Christians, to be a principal cause of the prevalence of their faith, in two of his epistles gives directions, undoubtedly copied from the injunctions observed by the clergy of those days, that the heathen priests be men of serious tempers and deportment; that they neither utter, nor hear, nor read, nor think of any thing licentious or indecent; that they banish far from them all offensive jests and libertine conversation: be neither expensive nor showish in their apparel; go to no entertainments but such as are made by the worthiest persons; frequent no taverns; appear but seldom in places of concourse; never be seen at the public games and spectacles; and take care that their wives and children and servants be pious, as well as themselves†. Let not, I intreat you, this apostate put us to shame.

But clergymen, who are serious in their whole behaviour, and the care of their families also, are often too unactive amongst their people: apt to think, that if they perform regularly the ordinary offices of the church, exhort from the pulpit such as will come to hear them, and answer the common occasional calls of parochial duty, they have done as much as they

* 1 Tim. v. 4, 5.

† Ep. 49. ad Arfac. p. 430, 431. Fragm. Ep. p. 301,—305.

they need, or well can, and so turn themselves to other matters: perhaps never visit some of their parishioners; and with the rest enter only into the same sort of talk, that any one else would do. Now, St Paul saith, he *taught* the Ephesians both *publicly and from house to house, testifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ* *; and *ceased not to warn every one day and night* †. He also commands Timothy to *preach the word, and be instant, in season and out of season* ‡; at stated times and others: not forcing advice upon persons, when it was likelier to do harm than good: but prudently improving less favourable opportunities, if no others offered. Thus unquestionably should we do. And a chief reason, why we have so little hold upon our people is, that we converse with them so little, as watchmen over their souls. The pastors of the foreign protestants outdo us greatly in this respect, and are honoured in proportion. The Romish priests have their laity under their hands, on one account or another, almost continually, and acquire by it an absolute dominion over them. Both the old dissenters from our church, and those who are now forming new separations, gain and preserve a surprising influence amongst their followers by personal religious intercourse. Why should not we learn from them? At first such applications may, by disuse, appear strange; and have both their difficulties and their dangers. But the most apprehensive of them will be the safest from them: and all will improve their talents by practice. On young persons you will be able to make good impressions by discourse with them before confirmation: these may be renewed in private exhortations afterwards to receive the sacrament: and the spiritual acquaintance, thus begun, may be continued ever after. Other means may be found with grown persons: on the first settling of a family in your parish; on occasion of any great sickness, or affliction, or mercy; on many others, if you seek for them, and engage worthy friends to assist you. Even common conversation may be led very naturally to points of piety and morals; and numbers be thus induced to reading proper books, to public, to private, to family devotion, to sobriety, justice, alms-giving and Christian love. When once you are well got into the method, you will proceed with ease and applause; provided

* Acts xx. 20, 21.

† Verse 31.

‡ 2 Tim. iv. 2.

provided your whole character and conduct be consistent, else you will fall into total disgrace; and particularly provided you convince your parishioners, that you *seek, not theirs, but them* *.

A due measure of disinterestedness is one main requisite for the success of a clergyman's labours. You will therefore avoid all mean attentions to small matters: never be rigorous in your demands of them; never engage in any disputes about them, unless a part of your income, too large to be given up, depends upon them. In all disputes you will prefer discreet references to proceedings at law: and when the latter become necessary, carry them on in the fairest, the least expensive, the friendliest manner. You will be very tender in your demands upon the poor, and very equitable towards the rich; though you will conscientiously preserve all the material rights, with which you are intrusted, for your successors. If you find room and reason to improve your income, you will do it within bounds: and prove, that no wrong motive induces you to it, by living with decent frugality, providing for your families with moderation, and going as far as ever you are able in acts of good-natured, and especially of pious liberality; which are the most valuable in themselves, the most incumbent on you, and the most overlooked by others. For nothing gives greater or juster offence, than to see a clergyman intent upon hoarding, or luxurious, or splendid, instead of being charitable.

Few indeed of our order have much to spare: and many have cause to wish for a more plentiful subsistence. Yet even these, and much more the better preferred, if they are earnest seekers and importunate solicitors for promotion, lower their characters grievously; and such as use indirect means to obtain it, are often providentially disappointed; or though they succeed, always dishonour themselves, and never do much good to others: whereas the lowest of their brethren will be justly respected, and may be highly useful, if he submits contentedly to God's good providence, and labours to lie within the compass of his income; exceeding which, without visible necessity, will bring some imputations even upon him,
and

* 2 Cor. xii. 14.

and deservedly a much heavier one such as enjoy an ampler provision.

However inoffensive we are, we must expect to receive, from time to time, injurious and provoking treatment, as the scripture hath forewarned us. We shall hurt both our own cause and that of religion dreadfully, if we return it; and do honour to both, if we behave under it calmly, *with such meekness of wisdom* *, as may tend to bring our adversaries over, if not to our sentiments concerning the matter in question, whatever it be, yet to a good opinion of our meaning and temper; or may at least, if we fail of success with them, engage more impartial persons to countenance and protect us. Indeed we ought, if possible, to keep not only ourselves, but others, out of all angry contests. We solemnly promised at our ordination, to *maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in us, quietness, peace and love among all Christian people, and especially among them that are or shall be committed to our charge*: and by so doing we are bound never to raise or foment personal, family, parochial, political, or ecclesiastical animosities, but do all in our power to compose and extinguish them; nor will any thing conduce more to our credit or to our usefulness. The political party-spirit is, God be thanked, of late years much abated. Let us guard against the return of it; show, in word and deed, becoming respect, as we have great cause, to our excellent king, and all who are put in authority under him: *not exercise ourselves in matters too high for us* †, but *be quiet and do our own business* ‡; let our moderation, even where we are concerned to meddle, *be known unto all men* §, exercising it even to those who have least of it; and always remember, that neither patriot love to our earthly country, nor loyal attachment to our earthly sovereign, will be accepted by our heavenly Father, without uniform obedience to the whole of his gospel.

Another point of great importance to clergymen is, that they be studious. This will keep your money from being spent unwisely; and likewise your time from being thrown away hurtfully or unprofitably, or hanging heavy on your hands. It will procure you reverence too, as persons of knowledge; whereas the idle will, even by the ignorant, be thought deficient,

* Jam. iii. 13. † Psal. cxxx. 2. ‡ 1 Thess. iv. 11. § Phil. iv. 4.

deficient. And, which is the main thing, this alone will enable you to understand the business of your station, and perform it well. But then you must apply to such things chiefly, as will fit you most to answer the great end of your employment; and *determine*, with St Paul, *to know nothing*, comparatively speaking, amongst your people, *save Christ Jesus and him crucified* *. The concern of a parish minister is, to make the lowest of his congregation apprehend the doctrine of salvation by repentance, faith and obedience; and to labour, that when they know the way of life, they may walk in it. If he doth not these things for them, he doth nothing; and it requires much consideration to find out the proper methods of doing them, and much pains and patience to try one after another. Smooth discourses, composed partly in flowing sentences which they cannot follow to the end; containing little that awakens their drowsy attention, little that inforces on them plainly and home what they must do to be saved; leave them as ignorant and unreformed as ever, and only lull them into a fatal security. Therefore bring yourselves down to their level; for what suits the meanest Christian will suit the highest: examine if they take in what you say, and change the form of it till they do. This I recommend for your first study; and be assured, you will improve yourselves by it no less than your hearers. But so far as you have opportunity consistently with this, apply to any part of science, to every part you can, that is connected with your profession: only learn, by weighing carefully the judgements and reasonings of others, to think modestly of yourselves: avoid, in the outset of your inquiries more especially, drawing hasty conclusions; be at least as much on your guard against fondness of new opinions, as prepossession for established doctrines; and beware of being misled, either by the positiveness of vehement writers, or the false colours of artful ones.

You will doubtless cultivate peculiarly those branches of knowledge, which the circumstances of the times, or of your parishes, peculiarly point out to you. God hath permitted us, for our sins, to be attacked, in a remarkable degree, by infidels on one hand, and by maintainers of innumerable strange

* 1 Cor. ii. 2.

notions on the other. And we have need, that every one, who is able to qualify himself well, should assist in defending his part of the common cause. For there are too many unanswered books abroad in the world, and more appearing daily, written against Christianity and morals, and the doctrines of our church. Nor have we of the clergy, for some time past, borne so large a share, comparatively with persons of other communions, in vindicating what we teach, as might be expected from us. I hope you are not often obliged, in this Diocese, to encounter unbelievers from the pulpit; and you will certainly not chuse to alarm your people, by refuting, in form, objections to which they are strangers; though it may be useful to obviate them briefly, and if possible without naming them. But as probably enough, some of you will, at one time or another, in company meet with such persons, or hear of their talk, I would give you a few directions in relation to them.

If any of them are virtuous in their conduct, and backward to offend in discourse, they should not be unreasonably provoked, but treated with respect. If any of them build their unbelief on serious argument, which plainly very few do, they should be directed to the books, or the learned men, that are best fitted to answer them; and the less able should prepare for combat with them, but not engage too far in it prematurely. If they cannot at present be convinced of the falsehood of their tenets, they should be shown however, in a gentle manner, the pernicious effects of promulging them. But if they will obstinately persist to sacrifice every thing valuable amongst men to their own vices, or their own vanity, we must openly withstand them, and warn others against them. Yet even this ought to be done without passion or bitterness, otherwise all the blame will be laid on us; especially without personal incivilities, even to the worst of them, else they will become still worse than they were. But then we must never assist the very best of them in gaining influence and growing dangerous; nor bring our own sincerity into question by intimacies with them, which they will usually represent, and sometimes believe, to proceed from our inwardly thinking as they do. Much less should we ever condescend to the shocking meanness of paying court for private ends, either to them, or to wicked wretches of any kind, though not infidels; but
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connect ourselves with worthy persons ; engage their support, and excite their endeavours to repress prophaneness and immorality.

It is peculiarly unhappy, that while we are employed on one side in defending the gospel, we are accused on another of corrupting it. I have not now in my view either the Church of Rome, or the Protestants who broke off from us a century ago. The methods of dealing with both have been long since prescribed, and I repeat them not ; but I intreat your attention to the movements of each, especially the former, if you have any of them in your parishes. But I mean to speak of persons risen up in our own times, and professing the strictest piety : who vehemently charge us with departing from the doctrines, and slighting the precepts of our religion ; but have indeed themselves advanced unjustifiable notions, as necessary truths ; giving good people groundless fears, and bad ones groundless hopes ; disturbed the understandings of some, impaired the circumstances of others ; prejudiced multitudes against their proper ministers, and prevented their edification by them ; produced first disorders in our churches, then partial or total separations from them ; and set up unauthorized teachers in their assemblies. Where these irregularities will end, God only knows ; but it behoves us to be very careful, that they make no progress through our fault.

Now, it would not only be injurious, but profane, to brand, with an opprobrious name, Christians remarkably serious, merely for being such ; and equally imprudent to disclaim them as not belonging to us, to let a sect gain the credit of them, and labour to drive them into it. Surely we should take, even were they wavering, or actually gone from us, the most respectful and persuasive means of recalling such, and fixing them with us. Nay, supposing any persons irrecoverably gone, we should not be hasty to condemn, even in our thoughts, either them or their party, as enthusiasts or hypocrites : *whatsoever they are, it maketh no matter to us* *. And much less ought we to say of either worse than we are sure they deserve. When we are undoubtedly well informed of any extravagant things, which they have asserted or done, it may be useful to speak strongly of them ; but not with anger

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* Gal. ii. 6.

and exaggeration ; which will only give them a handle to censure our uncharitableness, and confute us ; but with deep concern, that when so few persons express any zeal for the gospel, so many of those, who do run into extremes, that hurt its interests. Nor will ridicule become our character, or serve our cause better than invective. It may please those very highly, who are in no danger of being proselyted by them. But what shall we get by that ? Persons negligent of religion will at the same time be confirmed in their negligence ; and think, that all they need to avoid is being *righteous overmuch**. Tender minds will be grieved and wounded by such ill-placed levity ; and crafty declaimers will rail at us with success, as *scoffers*†, *denying the power of godliness*‡. But if we let fall any light expressions, that can be wrested into a seeming disrespect to any scripture doctrine or phrase, we shall give our adversaries unspeakable advantages ; and they have shown, that they will use them without mercy or equity. Therefore we must guard every word that we utter, against misrepresentations : be sure to express, in public and private, our firm belief of whatever evangelical truths border upon their mistakes ; and certainly be as vigilant over our behaviour, as our teaching ; encourage no violence, no rudeness towards them ; but recommend ourselves to them by our mildness, our seriousness, our diligence ; honour those who are truly devout and virtuous amongst them, much more on that account, than we blame them for being injudicious, and hard to please ; and be full as ready to acknowledge the good they have done, as to complain of the harm ; yet beware, and counsel others to beware, of being drawn, by esteem of their piety, into relishing their singularities, and patronizing their schism.

Acting thus, we shall not only *cut off occasion from those who desire occasion* || to speak evil of us, and be able to remonstrate with authority and effect against their excesses and wildnesses ; but, which is the chief point, we shall become better ministers of Christ for their harsh treatment of us. And we should always labour, that every thing may have this influence upon us : think with ourselves, if others go too far, whether we do not fall short ; ask our consciences, whether the small success of our endeavours be, in truth, as it ought, a heavy

* Eccl. vii. 16. † 2 Pet. iii. 3. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 15. || 2 Cor. xi. 12.

heavy grief to us ; whether we have carefully searched out, and try incessantly to overcome the difficulties that lie in our way to making them better. These things, if we are in earnest, we shall chiefly have at heart ; and if we are not in earnest, *we are of all men the most guilty, and the most miserable**.

In giving you my advice thus largely and freely on these several heads, I no more suppose you culpable in relation to any of them, than you do your parishioners, when you exhort them to any particular duties, or warn them against particular sins. On the contrary, to use the apostle's words, *I am persuaded of you, brethren, that ye are full of goodness, replenished with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, if I may presume to adopt, with due abatements, the subsequent words also, I have spoken somewhat boldly unto you in part, as putting you in mind, because of the grace which is given me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to you†, as you are to your respective congregations. And let us all pray for ourselves and each other daily, that we may so feed the flock of God which is among us, and be ensamples to it, that when the chief Shepherd shall appear, we may receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away‡.*

* 1 Cor. xv. 19. † Rom. xv. 14,—16. ‡ 1 Pet. v. 2,—4.

A
C H A R G E
DELIVERED TO THE
CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE
OF
C A N T E R B U R Y,

In the Year 1766.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

HAVING distributed amongst you, above three years ago, when sickness prevented me from visiting you in person, a printed discourse, in which I exhorted you, as St Paul did Timothy, to *take heed unto yourselves*; I proceed now to add, as he did, *and to your doctrine**.

To instruct persons in religion is the leading part of a clergyman's duty. And though he will do it in a very useful degree by the example of a Christian behaviour on all occasions; yet he will do it more especially in the peculiar discharge of his office. When he is only to use the forms prescribed him, he may, by using them with due reverence and propriety, greatly promote both knowledge and pious dispositions in his hearers. Therefore we ought to watch diligently over ourselves in this respect; and then it will be easier

* 1 Tim. iv. 16.

easier to convince our people, that they may and should learn a great deal from the exhortations, the prayers, the praises, the portions of scripture, of which our liturgy consists; that therefore, even when there is no other service, they should come to church for the sake of these far more constantly, and attend to them far more carefully, than the generality of them do; indeed should have them in much higher esteem, than the mere products of our private thoughts.

But I shall confine myself to the instructions, which you give of your own; speaking of them chiefly with a view of suggesting such advice to the younger part of you, as I hope the elder will approve, and enforce.

And here I must begin with repeating, what I need not enlarge upon, for I have done it already, that the foundation of every thing in our profession is true piety within our breasts, prompting us to excite it in others. Even heathens made it a rule, that an orator, if he would persuade, must be a good man: much more must a preacher. When a bad one utters Divine truths, we shut our ears, we feel indignation. Form yourselves therefore thoroughly, by devout meditations, and fervent prayer, to seriousness of heart, and zeal for the eternal welfare of souls: for then every thing else, that you are to do, will follow of course.

You will earnestly labour to complete yourselves in all proper knowledge: not merely the introductory kinds, which unhappily are often almost the only ones, taught the candidates for holy orders; but those chiefly, which have a closer connection with your work. And though, amongst these, the science of morals and natural religion is highly to be valued, yet the doctrines and precepts of the gospel require your principal regard beyond all comparison. It is of the gospel, that you are ministers; all other learning will leave you essentially unqualified; and this alone comprehends every thing, that is necessary. Without it, you will never *approve yourselves to God, as workmen that need not to be ashamed* *, nor make your hearers *wise unto salvation* †. Therefore you must diligently peruse the holy scriptures, and as much as you can of them in the original; *that, as the office of ordination expresses it, by daily reading and weighing of them ye may wax riper and stronger*

* 2 Tim. ii. 15.

† 2 Tim. iii. 15.

stronger in your ministry. And you must not grudge the expence, which may surely be well spared in some other things, of procuring according to your abilities, the assistance, both of such commentators, as will best show you the true sense of holy writ; and of such also, as will best direct you, how to draw from it needful instructions. General systems of theology, and particular treatises on points of moment, will enlarge your stock of matter; and the most noted sermons will be patterns to you of composition.

For I suppose the discourses, even of those who have the lowest qualifications, to be, in a great measure at least, of their own composition. Else they will seldom either sufficiently suit the congregation to which they are delivered, or be delivered in the manner which they ought. Besides, if persons decline that of fitting themselves in other ways for parochial usefulness, and throw away their time unwisely, if not worse, that will soon be observed to their disadvantage; and if once it be suspected, that through incapacity or idleness they steal what they preach, they will have small influence, if any. I do not mean, that no use ought to be made of the labours of others: for indeed I have made no little use of them in what I am saying, and about to say. I would have young clergymen especially, make very great use of the works of able divines: not inconsiderately and servilely transcribe them; but study, digest, contract, amplify, vary, adapt to their purpose, improve, if possible, what they find in them. For thus it will fairly become their own; mix naturally with what proceeds altogether from themselves; and preserve their youthful productions from the imputation of being empty and jejune. In the choice of such authors you will consult religious and judicious friends, always joining your own experience. Those writers, whom you find the most effectual to enlighten your understandings, convince you of your faults, animate you to good resolutions, and guide and support you in the execution of them, will best help you to produce the same effect on others. These therefore imitate: but with judgment. If, amidst their excellencies, you observe mistakes, defects, redundancies, flights indiscreetly high, despicably familiar concessions, fallies over-vehement; beware of adopting any of them. And remember too that a very close imitation, of
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singularities above all, will both betray you, and be disgusting.

When you go about to prepare an instruction for your people, first consider carefully of a proper subject and text: begging God to direct your choice, and dispose you to treat them in a proper way. Choosing a text, without need, that will surprise, or a seemingly barren one, to show what your art can extract from it, will appear ingenious perhaps to some, but vanity to most with good reason. Choosing one, that requires much accommodating to your purpose, is but mispending pains and time: and so is labouring to clear up a very obscure one, unless it be of great importance. And giving a new translation or sense of a text, unless the present hath considerable inconveniences, will only puzzle your audience, and tempt them to doubt, whether they understand the rest of their bible. Such a text is most convenient, as will branch out of itself into the main parts of your discourse: but at least you should make it appear to be the ground-work of your discourse, and not an after-thought.

Plan your method in the beginning of your composition: but change it afterwards, if you see cause. Never run the matter of one head into another, nor digress to any thing foreign; for every subject, well considered, will afford you enough. It is usually best to propose your general heads together, before you proceed upon them separately, and to give notice when you come to each. Subdivisions also assist the memory of the hearer, if they are not too many; and passing from a former head to the next by an easy transition, is graceful. But a disposition may be very orderly, without mentioning, in form, the several members of which it consists; and sometimes that formality prevents a discourse from flowing with freedom and spirit. After the explanatory part, proofs from reason and scripture take the next place; then inferences, if any useful ones follow peculiarly from what hath preceded: and lastly exhortations to suitable practice, which can hardly ever be omitted, and ought to be such as may leave a durable impression. The length of sermons, though it should always be moderate, may be very different at different times. Only give no room to think, that in a short one you have said but little; or in a long one have either said any thing which was

not pertinent, or dwelt upon any thing beyond what was needful.

An indispenfible point throughout is to preferve attention ; for if that be not paid, all your labour is loft. And perfons are fingularly apt to be inattentive to preachers. Our fubjects are, and ought to be, the moft common and trite of any. And hence, unlefs we ufe a little honeft art to prevent it, our people will think, will many of them find indeed, that they know beforehand moft of what we fhall deliver to them, and fo will foon grow weary of minding us. Coming to church, the bulk of mankind, even ftill, confider as a duty ; but hearing as they ought, they partly neglect, and partly experience to be difficult. Therefore we muft not only admonifh, but affift them. For this end we muft fhew them, from firft to laft, that we are not merely faying good things in their prefence, but directing what we fay to them perfonally, as a matter which concerns them beyond expreffion. More general difcourfes they often want fkill to take home to themfelves ; and oftener yet inclination ; fo they fit all the while ftupidly regardless of what is delivered. Therefore we muft intereft them in it, by calling upon them to obferve, by afking them questions to answer filently in their own minds, by every prudent incitement to follow us clofely. But then we muft make them underftand, that in preaching againft fin we never preach againft fuch or fuch a finner ; but mean to amend and improve all who want it ; wifhing every one to apply as much as poffible of what he hears to his own benefit, but nothing to the reproach of his neighbour.

Still you will prefs them in vain to pay attention, unlefs you win them to it by what you have to fay. And one principal contrivance for that purpofe is to make your fermons extremely clear. Terms and phrafes may be familiar to you, which are quite unintelligible to them ; and I fear this happens much oftener than we fufpect. Therefore guard againft it. Your expreffions may be very common, without being low ; yet employ the loweft, provided they are not ridiculous, rather than not be underftood. Let your fentences, and the parts of them, be fhort, where you can. And place your words fo, efpecially in the longer, that your meaning may be evident all the way. For if they take it not immediately, they have no time to confider of it, as they might in reading
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a book ; and if they are perplexed in the beginning of a period, they will never attempt going on with you to the end ; but give up the whole, as out of their reach. Avoid rusticity and grossness in your stile ; yet be not too fond of smooth and soft and flowing language ; but study to be nervous and expressive ; and bear the censure of being unpolished, rather than uninfluencing. Never multiply arguments beyond necessity ; for they will only tire : abstain from weak ones ; for they will discredit the strong. Employ no arguments to prove things, which need not be proved : for you will only make them doubtful. Employ no long or subtle arguments to prove any thing : but rest your assertions on the dictates of plain good sense. Never express yourselves on any point, as *having dominion over the faith* * of your hearers ; but lay before them the best evidence, of which they are capable. In matters too high for them, let them know, in a modest manner, that you speak the sentiments of the more learned, in which providence hath by their station directed them to acquiesce : in others, reason more at large, in the spirit of St Paul, when he told the Corinthians, *I speak as to wise men : judge ye what I say* †.

You might perhaps give more entertainment, and procure more applause, by disregarding some of these directions. But your business is, not to please or be admired, but to do good : to make men think, not of your abilities, attainments, or eloquence, but of the state of their own souls ; and to fix them in the belief and practice of what will render them happy now and to eternity. For this purpose (observe further) it will by no means suffice to teach them outward regularity and decency ; and let them fancy they have religion enough, when they come to church pretty constantly, and live as well as their neighbours : though, in some respects ill, and, scarce in any, well, from a principle of conscience. Or be they from a sense of duty ever so honest, and sober, and chaste, and beneficent ; another indispensable part of morals is the discipline of the inward man. And affectionate piety is full as necessary, as morals can be : and gospel piety no less than natural.

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* 2 Cor. i. 24.

† 1 Cor. x. 15.

Here then lay your foundation : and set before your people the lamentable condition of fallen man, the numerous actual sins, by which they have made it worse, the redemption wrought out for them by Jesus Christ, the nature and importance of true faith in him, their absolute need of the grace of the Divine Spirit in order to obey his precepts. This will be addressing yourselves to them as Christian ministers ought to Christian hearers. The holy scriptures will furnish you with matter for it abundantly. Short and plain reasonings, founded on their authority, will dart conviction into every mind : whereas, if your doctrine and your speech be not that of their bibles ; if you contradict, or explain away, or pass over in silence, any thing taught there, they who are best contented with you, will learn little from you ; and others will be offended, and quit you when they can. We have in fact lost many of our people to sectaries by not preaching in a manner sufficiently evangelical : and shall neither recover them from the extravagancies, into which they have run, nor keep more from going over to them, but by returning to the right way : *declaring all the counsel of God* * ; and that principally, *not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth* †.

Yet the obscurer of scriptural passages we shall do well to omit ; or, if there be need, illustrate them, as far as we can, briefly ; not to aim at minute explanations of mysteries ; but urge the belief of them from decisive passages of God's word, quoted according to its real import, and leave them as that hath left them. For by attempting to throw in more light, than our present state admits, you will only dazzle and blind those, who saw before as *through a glass darkly* ‡.

You are debtors indeed both to the wise and to the unwise ||. But remember, the ignorant are by far the greatest number ; and unnecessary knowledge, if you could communicate it to them, is of small use. But you will never be able to enlarge on abstruse and difficult points to the edification of the generality ; whereas you may dwell on the plainest to the satisfaction and improvement of the most learned. It is true, declining to show reading or acuteness may be to some a painful self-denial ; but able judges will easily perceive, both that
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* Acts xx. 27. † 1 Cor. ii. 13. ‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 12. || R9m. i. 14.

you could show them, and why you do not. Therefore enter but little, if at all, into matters about which your hearers are not likely to err, at least dangerously. Yet suffer not either the evidence or the fundamentals of Christianity, or the honour of the protestant religion, or of the established church, to want a due support, when you are any way called to the defence of them. At such times, demonstrate your zeal; but be sure to do it with a Christian temper; *in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves**: at others, avoid a controversial manner, and confine yourselves to brief instructions on these heads.

It may possibly sometimes be necessary in our sermons to vindicate our rights, and *magnify our office*†. But this must be done very sparingly and cautiously; so as to cut off all pretence, that we *take the oversight of God's flock*, either *for filthy lucre*, or from a desire of *being lords over his heritage*‡. We must never set up an undue, never a suspicious claim; but confess, that the treasure of the gospel is committed to us entirely for the sake of others, not our own; and that *we have it in earthen vessels*§; are liable to continual imperfections and frailties. Such humility is no less our wisdom, than our duty. For that clergyman will always acquire the greatest respect, who shows the most care to deserve it, and the least eagerness to demand it.

Every part of your discourses must preserve the gravity and the earnestness, which is inseparable from subjects of a religious nature. If you can speak of these lightly and negligently your auditors will suspect you have little concern about them; they of course will have less in hearing you; their thoughts will wander to the ends of the earth, or their attention to every thing be buried in sleep. But though languid in no part, you will however be comparatively cool in expositions of scripture, in doctrinal, in casuistical points, reserving your chief warmth for the great articles of Christian practice. There your very utmost endeavours will be needful to produce in your people a due sense of guilt and unworthiness, fervent desires of pardon, love to him who hath loved them, resignation to God's pleasure, firm purposes of obeying his laws; to caution them effectually against profaneness,

* 2 Tim. ii. 25. † Rom. xi. 13. ‡ 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. § 2 Cor. iv. 7.

ness, lukewarmness, formality, resentment, hard-heartedness, unjust love of gain, fondness of unlawful indulgences; to inspire them with good-will towards all men, with proportionably kind regards to those who stand in nearer relations to them, diligence to be useful in their several stations, reasonable indifference towards the things of this life, pious longings for a better. Their degree of knowledge, rank and circumstances of life, their prevailing notions and customs, will afford you much further employment, to make your sermons local, if I may so express it; calculated to promote the virtues which they are chiefly called to exercise, and guard against the sins, of which they are chiefly in danger. For what perfectly suits one congregation may be extremely foreign from the exigencies of another. And further still, you must not only urge them to do their duty, but to use the means of doing it; which must be pointed out to them; avoiding temptations, keeping clear of bad company, contracting friendships with serious and prudent persons, employing themselves in proper business, reading good books, forming pious, yet prudent, resolutions, and begging, in private prayer, *grace to help in time of need**: not strictly confining their devotions to any forms, though forms are very useful, but varying them according to their spiritual condition. These are the things, on which you must insist with your whole force; *not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts*†.

Yet, while you take without reserve all requisite freedom, you must also take care not to provoke, instead of reforming them; but show, that you sincerely wish well to them; and think as well of them as you can; you must praise them when you have opportunity; give them cautions oftener than reproofs, and never reprove harshly; but express a fatherly concern, rather than anger, at their faults. Represent no fault as worse than it is; and carry no injunction to an extravagant height. If you do, they will either think you unreasonable, or themselves incapable of becoming good; or will run into some absurdity by attempting it. And for their encouragement, along with the duties, lay before them, in a strong light, the comforts also, present and future, of religion.

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* Heb. iv. 16.

† 1 Thess. ii. 4.

It is but too possible, that sometimes you must excite your people to virtues, in which you are, more or less, deficient yourselves. For it would be heinous unfaithfulness to omit or explain away necessary precepts because you are imperfect in the practice of them. And lamentable is our case, if there be any Christian obligation, on which we dare not for shame speak freely: yet still worse, if we harden our consciences, till we venture boldly to enjoin what we habitually transgress. For in that case, not only our credit will be utterly lost, but our amendment almost absolutely hopeless. Therefore correct your own hearts and lives in the first place by the discourses which you compose: become in all points good men; and then you may fearlessly speak on all points like such.

Yet even good men must observe a difference. Those of less knowledge must express themselves with less positiveness, those of less gravity and discretion with less authority and strictness, than their betters. And every one should consider, what his age and standing, reputation for learning, prudence and piety, will support him in saying; that he may not take more upon him, than will be allowed him. Yet all must assiduously take pains to acquire, and preserve, such esteem, that they may say with propriety whatever their function requires. For how unhappy would it be to disqualify yourselves from usefulness by levity or indiscretion!

But even the best qualified to exhort must keep within due bounds; convince the judgment before they attempt to warm the passions; rise gradually into what deserves the name of vehemence; and be sure neither to rise any higher, nor continue in that strain any longer, than they are likely to carry their auditors along with them. For if they are cold, while the preacher is pathetic, the impression made upon them will be very different from what he wishes. And our nation is more disposed, than most others, to approve a temperate manner of speaking. Every thing, which can be called oratory, is apt to be deemed affectation: and if it goes a great length, raises contempt and ridicule. But were the most serious emotions to be raised by mere mechanical vehemence, they would be unfairly raised: and what is beyond nature will usually soon subside; perhaps with scorn, upon reflection, of what was admired when heard. Or supposing such admiration

tion to continue, bad effects may as possibly follow as good: whereas warmth of affection, excited to a proper degree by the rational enforcement of solid arguments, promises to be durable, and will never do harm. The faculty of moving hearers thus, is a most valuable blessing. And such as have but little of it, may considerably improve it, by labouring to affect themselves deeply with what they would say; and thinking, what methods of saying it will be most persuasive. But they must not attempt to force an unwilling genius too far. If they do, what it produces will be so ungraceful and unsuccessful, that they had much better content themselves to do as well as they can in their own way.

Your delivery must in the first place be such, that you can be heard; else you preach in vain: besides that speaking too low argues indolence and indifference; whereas an audible exertion is a mark of earnestness: and the common people are peculiarly pleased, when their minister appears to take pains about them. But then you must neither be precipitately quick, (for if your words be understood, your meaning will not) nor tediously slow; nor sink any one part of your sentence under its proper level, especially the concluding part. Distinctness will do much to supply want of strength in speaking; which however it is very material that you should try to remedy gradually, as many have done, by a prudent exercise of your voice. Yet straining beyond your due pitch will give your hearers pain, make you in some degree inarticulate, and produce a singing sort of cadence and tone. This last indeed hath been sometimes known to please weak persons: but it cannot possibly make them either wiser or better: and it offends the judicious extremely. Many learn in their childhood a provincial dialect; which they cannot lay aside easily; and yet should endeavour it, especially if they settle in a different part of the nation. Some acquire uncouth accents one knows not how; some bring them from the school or the college: and now and then one seems to hear a theatrical pronunciation; which hath been condemned even by Heathen writers upon oratory; and is the very worst, that a Christian orator can adopt. It reminds his hearers, greatly to his discredit, where he must probably have learnt it; he will also appear by means of it to be only acting a part, and be regarded accordingly. Indeed all remarkable imitation,



tion, in delivery as well as composition, though of a person in your own profession, and one justly admired, will be disliked. You will never attain to an advantageous resemblance of his manner; but, by a mistaken or overdone mimicry, turn what perhaps may be graceful in the original, into oddness. Or, could you avoid that, you would lessen your weight and influence; which must arise from speaking in your own character, not personating another. Every man's voice and utterance, as well as his face, belongs to himself alone; and it is vain to think either of looking or talking like such or such a one. Therefore preserve what is native to you: free it from adventitious faults; improve it, if you can; but remember, that you may deprave it by the endeavour; and certainly will, if you change it essentially. Speak to your people as you would in conversation, when you undertake to inform or persuade a friend, in a concern of great moment; only with more deliberateness, more strength and energy, in proportion to the numbers; and vary both your style and your elocution, as in conversation you always do, suitably to your matter. For monotony both absolutely prevents emotion, and soon deadens attention. It is worst indeed, when uniformly unnatural, by degenerating into a kind of chant. But merely to be uniformly inexpressive, be it through heaviness, or effeminacy, or insignificant lightness, is either very blameable, or, if it cannot be helped, very unhappy. And perhaps a little even of injudicious variety is better than a wearisome sameness.

In public speaking, persons commonly fall into errors, and sometimes great ones, without perceiving it, though they can observe small ones in others. Therefore you will act prudently in desiring some well-wisher, on whose judgement and frankness you can depend, to advertise you of any thing wrong in the conduct of your voice, or in your action; and you will show your gratitude and good sense by studying to amend it.

We of this nation are not given to use or admire much action, either in ordinary discourse, or even in popular harangues. And, were it for this reason only, a preacher should be moderate in it. But besides, in the nature of the thing, you had far better have none, than what is unbecoming, or unmeaning, or unsuitable to what you are saying, or repeat-

ed at certain distances, whatever you are saying. Yet somewhat of gesture, appearing to be artless, and regulated by propriety, may be very useful, especially in the warmer parts of exhortation, reproof, or even argument. For to be altogether motionless, when the subject is animating, and our language perhaps vehement, seems an inconsistency; and may raise a doubt, whether we are in earnest. But still defect in action is better than excess. And a great deal cannot well be used by those who read their sermons.

This is one objection against reading them: and there are several besides. Persons who are short-sighted, have peculiar reasons to avoid it. Indeed almost all persons are accustomed, from their early years, to read in a different tone from that in which they speak at other times: and we seldom correct it thoroughly. Or if we did, what we say in such manner as to make it seem the present dictate of our own hearts, will much better make its way into the hearts of others, than if our eyes are fixed all the while on a paper, from which we visibly recite the whole. It will ordinarily be uttered too with more disengaged freedom and livelier spirit. The preacher also will be abler to enforce his words by significant looks: to perceive from the countenances of his hearers, what they comprehend, and by what they are moved; and may accordingly enlarge on that head, or proceed to another, as he finds cause. He may likewise oppose with success irregular itinerant declaimers, who affect and gain popularity by this method: and as their credulous followers are apt to think it a supernatural gift, he may undeceive them by imitating in this case the practice of St Paul in another, which he describes thus: *what I do, I will do; that wherein they glory they may be found even as we* *. But then there must be a long and diligent preparation to do this well: some will scarce ever attain sufficient presence of mind, and readiness of expression: others will acquit themselves handsomely in a good flow of spirits, but meanly when these fail them: and though little inaccuracies will be observed by few, yet hesitations will by all, and every other considerable fault by sensible hearers, to the preacher's great disgrace. Or if such do get the faculty of being always able to say something plausible, it will tempt them

* 2 Cor. xi. 12

them to neglect the improvement of their understandings and their discourses; and to be content with digressing, whenever they are at a loss, from their text and their subject, to any point, on which they can be copious: to utter off hand such crudities, as they could not bear to write down; and think the meanest of extempore effusions good enough for the populace. Now, on the contrary, previously studying and writing sermons tends to fill them with well digested and well adapted matter, disposed in right order: especially, if you will carefully revise them every time you preach them; supply deficiencies, blot out repetitions, correct improprieties, guard against misapprehensions, enlighten what is obscure, familiarize what is too high, transpose what is wrongly placed, strengthen the weak parts, animate the languid ones. Your composition needs not be at all the stiffer, but may be the freer, for the pains thus employed upon it. You may frame it purposely to be spoken as if you were not reading it: and by looking it over a few times when you are about to use it, you may deliver it almost without being observed to read it. The more you acquire of this art, the more you will be liked, and the stronger impression you will make. But after all, *every man*, as the apostle saith on a different occasion, *hath his proper gift of God; one after this manner, another after that* *: let each cultivate his own; and no one censure or despise his brother. There is a middle way, used by our predecessors, of setting down, in short notes, the method and principal heads, and enlarging on them in such words as present themselves at the time. Perhaps, duly managed, this would be the best. That which is, or lately was, common amongst foreign divines, of writing sermons first, then getting and repeating them by heart, not only is unreasonably laborious, but subjects persons to the hazard of stopping disagreeably, and even breaking off abruptly, for want of memory. Or if they escape that danger, there still remains another, of saying their lesson with ungraceful marks of fear and caution.

Instead of taking a text, which comprehends within itself the whole subject, of which you would treat, it may often be useful to chuse one, which hath a reference to things preceding and following it, and to expound all the context. This

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will

* 1 Cor. vii, 7.

will afford you a variety of matter, and give you opportunities for short unexpected remarks; with which persons are frequently more struck, than with an entire discourse; for of the latter they foresee the drift all the way, and therefore set themselves to fence against it. Thus also you may illustrate the beauties, at the same time that you show the practical uses, of large portions of scripture at once: for instance, of a parable, a conversation, a miracle, of our blessed Lord; or a narration concerning this or that other memorable person, whether deserving of praise or blame. For scripture histories and examples are easily remembered, and have great weight. In proportion as we overlook them, we shall appear less to be ministers of God's word: and our people will have less veneration for us, or for it, or for both. You may also in this method, as you go along, obviate objections to passages of God's word without stating them in form, at which otherwise many may stumble, if they read with attention: and if they do not attend, they will read with no profit. Several things in holy writ seem to be strange; hardly consistent one with another, or with our natural notions. Of these difficulties, which must always perplex persons, and may often deliver them over a prey to infidels, you may occasionally remove one and another; meddling with none, but such as you can overcome: and from your success in these, you may observe to your auditors the probability, that others are capable of solutions also. Perhaps they will forget your solution; but they will remember that they heard one, and may have it repeated to them, if they please. By these means you will teach your people, what is grievously wanting in the present age, to value their bibles more, and understand them better; and to read them both with pleasure and profit, drawing from them useful inferences and observations, as they have heard you do. Formerly courses of lectures on whole books of scripture were customary in churches; and they were doubtless extremely beneficial. It would not be easy, if possible, to revive these now; but the practice which I have been proposing to you, is some approach towards them.

I would also advise you to instruct your parishioners, amongst other things, from some proper text or texts, in the daily and occasional services of the church; not with a view to extol either immoderately, much less to provoke wrath against

gainst those who dissent from us ; but mildly to answer unjust imputations upon our liturgy, and chiefly to show the meaning, the reasons, the uses of each part ; that your congregations may, as the apostle expresses it, *pray with the understanding* *. In all compositions, there will be some things, which to some persons want explaining ; and, were the whole ever so clear, men are strangely apt both to hear and to speak words, that are become familiar to them, with scarce any attention to their sense. And so by degrees a bodily attendance and worship become all that they pay ; and they return home almost as little edified, as they would by devotions in a tongue unknown. Convincing them of this fault, and assisting them to mend it, must greatly contribute to the promotion of true piety amongst them. Nor will it be a small benefit, if, in the course of your liturgical instructions, you can persuade the bulk of your congregations to join in the decent use of psalmody, as their forefathers did ; instead of the present shameful neglect of it, by almost all, and the conceited abuse of it by a few.

But a fervent desire of being useful will teach you more than any particular directions can, upon every head. Without this desire, you will either be negligent ; or if you would seem zealous, you will be detected for want of uniformity and perseverance. Therefore make sure first that all be right within, and *out of the good treasure of the heart you will bring forth good things* †, naturally and prudently, and, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, effectually. It is not easy indeed even to instruct the willing ; much less to convince the unwilling, and reform the wicked. But still these are the purposes, for which we are God's Embassadors ; and we must try with indefatigable perseverance every way to execute our commission. We must study human nature in our own breasts, and those of others : we must acquaint ourselves, by all innocent means, with the opinions and practices of the world, especially of our hearers, that we may lay their hearts and lives open to their view, and make them feel what we say. We must consider all the while we compose, and reconsider as we preach, and afterwards : " Is this adapted sufficiently to the capacities, the state of mind, the circumstances of the
" poor

* 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

† Mat. xii. 35.

"poor people who are to hear it: will this part be clear, that
 "home enough, a third well guarded against mistakes: will
 "they go back as much better disposed than they came, as it
 "is in our power to make them?" Perhaps one or more
 ways of representing a necessary doctrine or duty have failed.
 We must think, whether a more likely may not be found, or
 a less likely in appearance prove more successful.

If you have preached a considerable time in a place, and
 done little or no good; there must, in all probability, be some
 fault, not only in your hearers, but in you or your sermons.
For the word of God, when duly dispensed, is to this day, as it
 was originally, *powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword**.
 Inquire then, where the fault may be. Never despair, nor
 be immoderately grieved, if your success be small: but be not
 indifferent about it: do not content yourselves with the indo-
 lent plea, that you have done your duty, and are not answer-
 able for the event. You may have done it as far as the law
 requires: yet by no means have discharged your consciences.
 You may have done it conscientiously, yet not with the dili-
 gence or the address that you ought. And as we are seldom
 easy in other cases, when we fail of our end; if we are so in
 this, it doth not look well. At least consult your hearts up-
 on the point. And if you have been deficient, beg of God
 pardon, grace and direction: endeavour to do more for your
 people: consult your brethren about the means. Conversa-
 tion of this nature will much better become clergymen when
 they meet, than any which is not relative to their profession,
 or only relative to the profits of it. But especially ask the ad-
 vice of the most able and serious.

I am very sensible, that in all the particulars before men-
 tioned I have been far from observing sufficiently myself the
 rules which I have now recommended to you: but hope I
 shall make some amends, though late, to the church of Christ,
 by exhorting and directing others. It was my purpose, after
 speaking of stated instructions, to have proceeded to occasional
 ones: a very important and sadly neglected part of the pasto-
 ral care. But my strength will not suffice; and I have de-
 tained you already too long. If God spare me to another like
 occasion, that shall be my subject. If not, as is most probable,
 I shall

* Heb. iv. 12.

I shall endeavour to leave behind me some admonitions to you concerning it*. At present I can only intreat you to consider very seriously, what numbers there are in most parishes, and therefore perhaps in yours, whom you cannot think to be in a state of salvation; and how greatly it imports you to use with them, as you solemnly promised at your ordination, not only *public but private monitions, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given.* The eternal welfare of many poor creatures may depend on this; and your own is deeply concerned in it, as God himself hath declared: who will certainly expect that what he requires you to do, be done to the very utmost of your ability. *Son of Man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. But if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul†.*

* Nothing of this kind has been found among his Grace's papers.

† Ezek. iii. 17, 18, 19. xxxiii. 7, 8, 9.

INSTRUCTIONS
GIVEN TO
CANDIDATES
FOR
ORDERS,

AFTER THEIR SUBSCRIBING THE ARTICLES.

GENTLEMEN,

YOU have now made the subscription, by law required. And as, in so doing, you have acknowledged the Liturgy and Articles of the Church of England to be agreeable to the word of God; I hope you will think yourselves bound, as you are, to be careful, that the instructions which you give, and the doctrines which you maintain, in public and in private, be agreeable to that Liturgy and those Articles: that you neither contradict, nor omit to inculcate and defend, on proper occasions, the truths, which they contain.

In the next place, I exhort you to spend a due share of the remainder of this day, in what, I trust, hath employed not a little of your time already; weighing diligently the nature and importance of the undertaking, in which you are about to engage; forming suitable resolutions; and earnestly begging that grace of God, which alone can *make you able ministers of the New Testament* *.

Nothing

* 2 Cor. iii. 6.

Nothing is better fitted to assist you in this good work, than the office of ordination, of Deacons or Priests, as you are respectively concerned. You must certainly have read it over, before you offered yourselves. Since that, you have been directed to read it again. But I desire you to peruse it once more this afternoon with your best attention, that you may join in it to-morrow with a greater degree of rational seriousness; and particularly, that you may answer, on more deliberate consideration, the questions, which will then be put to you. For there can hardly be a case, in which either insincerity, or even thoughtlessness, would carry in it heavier guilt.

And that you may be in no perplexity concerning the meaning or fitness of any part of the office, it may be useful to go through some parts of it along with you beforehand, proceeding as they lie in the book.

The first thing, which Candidates, both for Deacons and Priests orders, after they are presented, are required to do, as distinct from the rest of the congregation, is to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy. For, as you are to be ministers of the church established by law in this nation, it is evidently reasonable, that the civil government, established by law, should be assured of the fidelity and affection of persons to whom it gives and secures privileges and profits; and who are intrusted with the care, amongst other matters, of making men good subjects. Now, these oaths bind every person, who takes them, to *honour the king**; and, by consequence, all that are put in authority under him, both in word and deed; and to *lead*, in subjection to them, *quiet and peaceable lives*†. That these things may, with a good conscience, be promised and performed, there is no just cause of doubt. But if any one thinks there is, he ought to apply for satisfaction; and till he receives it, he ought to abstain from taking the oaths. *For whatever is not of faith is sin*‡: and in this case it would be no less than perjury. Nothing is a plea sufficient for committing any sin, much less one so heinous: not even all the force that can be used. But here is no shadow of force. You are come voluntarily to offer yourselves, well knowing

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that

* 1 Pet. ii. 17.

† 1 Tim. ii. 2.

‡ Rom. xiv. 23.

that the oaths must be tendered to you; that is, you have made it your choice to take them.

But by your subscription you have entered into a further obligation; to use the liturgy in all your public ministrations*: and therefore, to pray for the king by name, for his long life and prosperity, for his obtaining victory over all his enemies. God forbid, that any one who doth this, should be disaffected to the government, under which we live. And if we are friends, it is both our duty and our wisdom to show that we are. For thus we shall strengthen an establishment, on which, under God, the safe enjoyment of our religion intirely depends; we shall procure the support, which we cannot but be sensible, that we want; and we shall silence, or at least confute those, who love to speak despitefully against us on this head.

After the oaths, Candidates for Deacons orders are asked: *Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration?* A solemn question; and which ought to be well considered, before it is answered. Observe then, it is not said, *Do you feel*; have you an immediate perception of such an impulse from the Holy Ghost, as you can distinguish from all other inward movements by its manner of impressing you: but, *Do you trust*; are you on good grounds persuaded? What then are the proper grounds of such persuasion?

In the first place, If he hath not moved you effectually to live *soberly, righteously, and godly*†, you may be sure he hath not moved you to assume the office of a minister in God's church. Examine yourselves therefore strictly on this point: a most important one to all men; but to you, if possible, above all; and before you presume to officiate in his house, ask your hearts, *Do you transgress, do you omit, no duty, wilfully or knowingly?* Have you a genuine practical faith in Christ? Are you, on the terms of the gospel covenant, intitled to everlasting life? But supposing that you are, more is requisite in the present case: and what more, the latter part of the question points out. *To serve God, for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his church.* This then being the design,

* Can. 36.

† Tit. ii. 12.

sign of the office; if, so far as you know your own hearts, this is your motive to desire it; and if, so far as you can judge of your own abilities and attainments, they are equal to it in some competent degree: then you may safely answer, that *you trust you are moved by the Holy Ghost to take it upon you.* For *we can have such trust to Godward only through Christ, who hath sent us the Spirit: we are not sufficient to do or think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God* *. Together with this principal motive, of *serving God by edifying his people*, you may allowably have the subordinate one, of providing a decent maintenance for your own support, and for those who may belong to you: but if you are indifferent or cool about the former, and attentive only or chiefly to the latter: since you cannot think that such dispositions are approved by the Holy Spirit, as proper for the ministry, you will be guilty of *lying to him* †, if you affirm, that he hath moved you to enter on it with them. Therefore inspect your souls thoroughly; and form them, by the help of Divine grace, to be duly influenced by the right principle, before you venture to answer this question: which is very wisely made the leading one; because your inducement will be the rule of your behaviour, and probably also the measure of your success.

The next question, put to those who apply for Deacons orders, and the first to such as have received them, and desire to be admitted priests, is, *Do you think, that you are truly called, according to the will of Christ, and the due order of this realm, to the ministry of the church?* That is, are you conscious neither of any defect in body or mind, nor of any other impediment, which may, for the present, if not for ever, be, according to the laws of God or man, a just obstacle in your way? Such things may escape our knowledge or memory. Therefore we call upon you to inform us. And you are bound to answer with sincerity.

It is not requisite, that I should enlarge on every question; though it is, that you should weigh every one seriously. That, which recites the duties of Deacons, may seem to have some difficulty in it; as it assigns to them occupations, which the acts of the apostles do not, in the history of their appointment ‡; and as they are but little employed now in the single business,

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there

* 2 Cor. iii. 4, 5.

† Acts v. 3.

‡ Acts vi.

there allotted to them. But that passage of scripture plainly was intended to set forth, only the immediate and urgent reason of ordaining them, not the whole of what was, then or soon after, given them in charge. For we find in the same book, that Philip the Deacon both preached and baptized *. And the qualifications, required in Deacons by St Paul †, intimate very clearly, that more things must, even then, have been incumbent upon them, than administering to the relief of the poor. Accordingly, from the primitive ages downwards, they are described as performing occasionally most of the same offices, which they do now; and being, what their name denotes, assistant and subservient to priests in all proper employments ‡. And the less they are engaged in their chief original one, the more opportunity and the more need they have, to show diligence in the other good works, belonging or suited peculiarly to their station.

The next question is common to candidates for each order: *Will you fashion your own lives, and those of your families, so far as in you lieth, to be wholesome examples to the flock of Christ?* This extends to avoiding in your own behaviour, and restraining in theirs, follies, levities, mean and disreputable actions, as well as crimes and vices. The apostle enjoins *deacons and their wives to be grave* §: much more then ought priests. He enjoins every Christian to *abstain from all appearance of evil* ||. And our blessed Lord enjoins all his disciples to *be wise*, as well as *harmless* ¶. Therefore govern yourselves and yours by these rules: and consider frequently, whether you observe them well. For without it you will neither gain esteem, nor do good.

The last question, put alike to the whole number of candidates, is, *Will you reverently obey your ordinary, and them to whom the government over you is committed?* You would be bound to this, though you were not to promise it; for both reason and scripture demand it. Still more firmly you will be bound, when you have promised it, though it were of small importance. But it is of very great, not only to the dignity and ease of your superiors, but to your own interest, and the benefit

* Acts viii. 5,—13. 26,—40.

† 1 Tim. iii. 8,—13.

‡ See Bingham's orig. eccl. l. 2. c. 20.

§ 1 Tim. iii. 8, 11.

|| 1 Thess. v. 22.

¶ Mat. x. 16.

nefit of the whole church. Our Saviour both commands, and prayed for unity amongst his followers in the most expreffive terms*. Without union there cannot be a fufficient degree either of ftrength or beauty: and without fubordination there cannot long be union. Therefore *obey*, as the apoftle directs, *them that have the rule over you*†; and promote their honour, their credit, their influence. This will make us abler to ferve the caufe of religion, and protect you. And God forbid that, fo far as we are able, we fhould ever fail to be willing and zealous.

In the office for the ordination of priefts, after a pious and awful charge, which I recommend to your moft ferious attention, follow feveral queftions of the greateft moment, your answers to which, I hope, you will remember to the laft day of your lives. In thefe answers, befides what hath been already mentioned, you promife, that *the doctrine and difcipline of Chrift, as contained in fcripture, and received in this church and realm*, fhall be the ftandard of your teaching and acting; and every thing contrary to them be faithfully oppofed by you: that you will *ufe both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the fick as to the whole, within your cures*; and that, as frequently and fully as need fhall require, and occafion be given. You promife alfo, that you will be diligent in prayers and reading the holy fcriptures; which by the preceding exhortation evidently appears to mean, private prayer and reading; and in fuch ftudies, as help to the knowledge of fcripture; laying afide the ftudy of the world and the flefh: that is, not making, either grofs pleasures, or more refined amufements, even literary ones unconnected with your profeflion, or power, or profit, or advancement, or applaufe, your great aim in life; but labouring chiefly to qualify yourfelves for doing good to the fouls of men, and applying carefully to that purpofe whatever qualifications you attain. Further yet, you promife, that you will maintain and fet forwards, as much as lieth in you, quietnefs, peace and love among all Chriftian people; and efpecially among them that are or fhall be committed to your charge. By this you oblige yourfelves, never to raife or promote perfonal, family, parochial, ecclefiaftical, political, or any other, animofities; but to difcourage, and, if poffible, compofe and extinguifh them; than which

* John xiii. 34, 35. xvii. 11, 12, 21, 22, 23.

† Heb. xiii. 17.

which you cannot perform a more Christian part, or one more conducive to your honour and your usefulness.

But, besides pondering well beforehand these answers, which you are to make, I earnestly beg you, to read and think them over often afterwards; and particularly, at each return of the ember weeks to examine yourselves, as in the presence of God, whether you have made good the engagement, into which you entered at your ordination. So far as you have, this practice will afford you the greatest possible comfort; so far as you may have failed, it will suggest to you the most useful admonition.

After these questions, a short silence is appointed to be kept for the secret prayers of the congregation, that God would enable and incline you to do what you have undertaken: which blessing, I hope, you will ask at the same time for yourselves very earnestly. Then follows a hymn of considerable antiquity; and to be repeated with much reverence, on account of the important petitions and doctrines comprized in it, tho' it be altogether void of ornament in that old translation, which we still retain. Next to this, follows a very proper address to the throne of grace, pronounced by the Bishop alone, in the name of the whole assembly; which is instantly succeeded by the act of ordination.

The first words of that, *receive the Holy Ghost*, were used by our Saviour to his apostles, immediately after he had said, *as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you**. God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him†: and he was able to bestow what measure he pleased, both of spiritual gifts and graces upon others. He meant however by this benediction to confer only the ordinary ones: for the extraordinary, you know, were reserved till after his ascension. Far be it from the Bishops of his Church to claim, even in respect of the former, the powers which he had. But still these words in our mouths, when spoken over you, properly express, in the first place, the communication of that authority, which proceeds from the Holy Ghost. For we read, that the Holy Ghost said, *Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work, whereunto I have called them‡*: and that the latter of these exhorted the elders of the church of Ephesus, *Take heed to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made*

* John xx. 21, 22.

† John iii. 34.

‡ Acts xiii. 2

made you overseers *. They also express, in the second place, our earnest request to the Father of mercies, that you may at all times enjoy such proportions, both of the graces and gifts of the Spirit, as will be needful for you; which request, if it be not your own fault, will prove effectual; because having, in the common course of his providence, appointed us, tho' unworthy, to act in this behalf, he will assuredly be ready to own and bless our ministrations.

It follows very soon: *whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained*. These again are the words of Christ to his apostles, immediately after the former. But he did not grant to them the power, either of retaining the sins of penitent persons, or of forgiving the impenitent. Nor do we pretend to grant, by uttering them, all the powers which the apostles had in this respect. They had *the discernment of spirits* †: and could say with certainty, when persons were penitent, and consequently forgiven, and when not ‡. They were able also to inflict miraculous punishments on offenders; and to remove, on their repentance, the punishments which had been inflicted. These words will convey nothing of all this to you. But still, when we use them, they give you, first, an assurance, that according to the terms of that gospel, which you are to preach, men shall be pardoned or condemned: secondly, a right of inflicting ecclesiastical censures for a shorter or longer time, and of taking them off; which, in regard to external communion, is retaining or forgiving offences. This power, being bestowed for the edification of the church, must be restrained, not only by general rules of order, but according to the particular exigencies of circumstances. And our church wishes, with much reason, or circumstances more favourable to the exertion of it §. But how little soever exerted, the power is inherent in the office of priesthood. And though we are no more infallible in our proceedings and sentences, than temporal judges are in theirs; yet our acts, as well as theirs, are to be respected, as done by competent authority. And if they are done on good grounds also, *whatever we shall bind or loose on earth, will be bound or loosed in heaven*.

* Acts xx. 28.

† 1 Cor. xii. 10.

‡ Acts viii. 21, 23.

§ Office of Communion.

ven *. Nor will other proofs of repentance be sufficient in the sight of God, if submission to the discipline of the church of Christ, when it hath been offended, and requires due satisfaction, be obstinately refused, either from haughtiness or negligence.

To these words is subjoined the concluding charge: *and be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of his holy sacraments.* This then is the stewardship committed to you. And you cannot but see, in what a profane and corrupt age it is committed to you: how grievously religion, and its ministers, are hated or despised; how lamentably both they, and its other professors, are degenerated and divided. Your business will be, each within the sphere of his influence, to prevent these things from growing worse; which, bad as they are, they still may; and, if possible, to make them better; or at least, to recover or preserve such, as you can, from the general depravity. But you will never succeed in your attempts for this purpose, either by bitterness against infidels, heretics, and sectaries, or by contempt and ridicule of enthusiastic or superstitious persons. The only right method is a very different one: diligent study, to fit yourselves more completely for teaching and vindicating the truths of Christianity: scriptural and rational instruction, assiduously given, with zeal and mildness duly tempered, and suited to the capacities and condition of your hearers: a willing and devout and affecting performance of all sacred rites, whether in the church or elsewhere; but above all, a behaviour, innocent, humble, peaceable, disinterested, beneficent, abstemious, discreet, religious.

Take heed therefore to your steps; and walk in the present evil days with such piety and caution, that, as the office exhorts, *you may neither offend, nor be occasion that others offend*; but may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion† against you; that *they who are of the contrary part, and falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ, may be ashamed ‡ of themselves*; or however, that your master and judge may not *be ashamed of you ||* at the great day, but pronounce over each of you, *well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord §.*

* Mat. xviii. 18. † 2 Cor. xi. 12. ‡ Tit. ii. 8. 1 Pet. iii. 16.

|| Mark viii. 38. Luke ix. 26. § Mat. xxv. 21.

O R A T I O

quam coram

S Y N O D O

PROVINCIAE CANTUARIENSIS

Anno 1761 convocata

habendam scripserat

sed morbo praepeditus non habuit;

A R C H I E P I S C O P U S.

SATISFECISTIS egregie, Fratres, nostrae omnium expectationi, Prolocutore electo, quem naturae dotibus cumulatū, fide Christiana penitus imbutum, humanitate politum, eruditione excultum, auctoritate gravem novimus: atque adeo dignissimum, qui a viro laudato iis ornaretur praconiis, quae in utrumque conveniunt. Concesso igitur vobis libenter, quem petitis, Referendario, intendamus jam communiter animos in ea, quae hodiernae celebritatis ratio postulat. Et haec quidem, licet minime idoneus, tamen eum id sit officii mei, conabor exponere; oratione usus Latina, (sic enim est in more positum, nequid, puto, intelligant inepti auditores) nulla autem adhibita dicendi elegantia; quam si sectarer tandem post quadraginta ferme annorum desuetudinem, omnino non assequerer; sed familiari admodum ac tenui sermone: Deum orans ut quod e pectore meo proveniet in vestra descendat, et fructum ferat. Neque enim plausum, ne vestrum quidem, capto; de

hoc unice sollicitus, ut aliquid, si possum, proferam, quo sapientiores et meliores utrinque evadamus, et servi fideles utilesque domini nostri Jesu Christi inveniamur in supremo illo die. Convenimus, Patres Fratresque, in id parati, ut opem feramus veræ religioni, bonisque moribus, modo quidpiam ejusmodi nobis demandetur. Quod cum jam diu non sit factum, rogitant homines procacioris ingenii, quorsum huc ridenda solennitate, sic enim interpretantur, congregamur, quibus nihil negotii datum est, nec etiam dabitur. Sinite quæso, ut huic petulantiae, nimium grassanti, pauca prius reponam, quam ad alia progrediar.

Illudne ergo spernendum existimant, quod hæc sacra Synodus eodem antiquissimo jure constituta est, quo comitia procerum & eorum qui plebis vicem gerunt; quodque optimi principis jussu acciti comparemus? Reverebuntur, qui recta sapiunt, utramque partem, tam ecclesiasticam quam civilem, reipublicæ Britannicæ, nec vel unum lapidem, præsertim qui fundamenta contingat, ex venerando ædificio dimotum cupient, ne totius molis, ut superiore sæculo, ruina consequatur. Multa fecit hic cætus in redintegrandâ puriori fide cultuque, reipublicæ cumprimis utilia: hoc solo meritis, ut semper in posterum honorifice convocaretur. Quæ porro sit factururus, vel nunc vel posthac, quodcumque concessa fuerit aliquid agendi facultas, in pejus præjudicari non debet: neque paulo modestiores negaturos putem, quin ab eo non pauca in commune bonum fieri possent, et a nobis fierent lubenter. Quid quod & interim orientur ab hoc confessu commoda non mediocria? Videbunt cives nostri in eum intuentes, quinam simus, qui ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, Episcopi, Decani, Archidiaconi, præsidemus; qualesque sibi delegerit Procuratores Clerus parochialis: unde fore confidimus, ut nihil sibi a nobis extimescendum esse autument, sed omnia quæ bona sunt speranda. Congregati preces coram Deo fudimus concorditer: quas quin ille, promissi memor, clementer acceperit, nefas est dubitare. Hortationi interfuistis, pietate pariter ac prudentia summa refertæ, quæ etsi multorum aures recitata prætervolaverit, omnium animos lecta inflammabit. Consilia etiam saluberrima præsentibus invicem pro re nata communicabimus. Licebit denique Regem uno ore suppliciter compellere; nostram in illum fidem & observantiam, in religionem, virtutem, legitimam libertatem, cum civilem tum ecclesiasticam,

cam, studium testari; eoque efficere, ut etiam si natura atque institutione nunquam non fuerit præconibus veritatis propitius, fiat tamen indies benignior, & spretis male feriatorum hominum cavillationibus, quicquid vel factu vel creduti indignum est, cohibeat, quantum salva unicuique conscientiae prærogativa potest; *quæcunque* autem sunt *vera, quæcunque pudica, iusta, sancta, amabilia, bonæ famæ* *, non solum, ut semper, exemplo, sed monitis privatim, edictis publice, animose tueatur.

Hæc nihil esse, nemo dixerit: satis non esse, ultro fateor. Disquiramus igitur, unde quod deest possit accedere.

Clamabunt extemplo fervidiores, argumentis, obtestationibus, amicorum deprecatione, purpuratorum gratia, omni machina contendendum, ut quæcunque jura Synodis prioribus fuerunt attributa, iisdem armetur et hæc, regio mandato: refuscitandam demum ejus ope collapsam & emortuam veteris ecclesiæ disciplinam, atque exercendam strenue; nostrâ enim nos jam pridem evulvisse inertia. Et hi quidem plerumque religiosi sunt viri, multaque lectione exercitati. Sed parum vident, quid ferant tempora, quove loco simus.

Primum adversarios habemus omnes, non modo qui Deum esse aperte negant, quos omni tempore fuisse paucos arbitror, sed eos etiam qui, ut iste olim, *oratione relinquunt, re tollunt*: & sub recenti latitantes Deistarum nomine, si verum eloqui oportet, Athei sunt. Neque enim numen illud suum bonos remunerari, neque improbos punire credunt: unde nullius foret momenti, existeret necne. Proinde constant in eo sibi quod nullum ei honorem, vel una vel seorsim, quantum ego quidem inaudiverim, exhibeant; & naturæ, quas vocant, leges iis limitibus quisque circumscribat, qui lubrici suæ optime congruant; eaque forte mutata, confestim aliud sibi juris naturalis corpus effingant, vel exceptiones quasdam futes in sui gratiam excogitent, ut permissum videatur quicquid arridet. Licentiam interim, quam sibi infinitam asserunt, adeo gravate cum piis communicant, ut a cultu divino quolibet obvios fanis & convitiis arceant, suos vero nonnunquam interdictionibus minisque; egregii scilicet, immo vero, si creditis, unici, libertatis vindices.

Cum his fere se conjungunt, neque multo sunt nobis æquiores, qui doctrinam Christianam profitentur quidem, sed parvi pendunt, aut erroribus contaminant: item qui dignitati

E e 2

nostræ

* Phil. iv. 8.

nostræ invident, aut possessionibus inhiant. Quot autem universi sint, quantumque confociati valeant, animus dicere horrescit.

Jam porro, ut de Pontificiis taceam, qui occultis licet nunc dierum odiis, immortalibus tamen, diligenter sibi vires idoneum tempus comparant; inter ipsos Reformatos, quid de Dissidentium, uti vocitantur, Fratrum affectu statuemus? Hos quidem spes erat in matris antiquæ gremium se propediem recepturos; utpote tandem Episcopatum & Liturgiam præscriptam vel probantes, vel ferri posse confidentes, nec amplius innocuis cæremoniis, tanquam larvis, exterritos. Contra vero nuper illorum plures, partim opiniones pravas de varijs Fidei Capitibus arripuerunt, partim hoc nobis objiciunt, quod quæ legibus civilibus fundatur Ecclesia, eo ipso desit Christo rite subesse. Unde cum prius videri poteramus in mutuos ruituri amplexus, nunc ex improvviso resiliunt, dissidentque longissime: nec raro amicitias cum apertis Christiani nominis hostibus studiose colunt, dum nos asperrime exagitant.

Hi igitur omnes, quos hætenus memoravi, statim ut aliquid aggredi cœpimus, cuncta clamoribus opplebunt, aliud Synodum præ se ferre, aliud meditari dictitabunt, affectatæ tyrannidis dicam scribing, patulis multorum auribus, quæ sibi imaginantur, facile infundent; atque etiam quæ ipsi non credunt, aliis persuadebunt. Etenim sunt mire propensi homines, alioquin haud mali, ad suspiciones adversum nos fovendas: quæ cum antehac (nam fatendum est,) aliquatenus justæ fuerint, nimium tenaci reconduntur usque memoria, nec absque diuturno labore eximentur.

Verum obsepta est et aliis obstaculis via. Non adeo multa sane, quod mihi quidem constat, prompta habemus, quæ in Synodo proponantur: eaque brevi spatio possemus ad exitum perducere. Sed cum primum rumor percrebuerit ad negotia tractanda nos accingi, plurimas illico plurimi molitiones instituent, suum quisque commentum invitis ingerens; mille opinionum obtrudentur monstra, mille speciosæ, aut ne speciosæ quidem, rerum novandarum formulæ, quædam a malevolis, quædam ab indoctis aut rudibus, quædam etiam a cordatioribus ipsis: et quod hic necessarium, ille exitabile esse pronuntiabit. Hæc omnia si rejicimus oblata, superbum videbitur: si sumimus dijudicanda, in infinitum res abibit: quoquo nos vertamus, gravem offensionem concitabimus; nec tandem fortasse quidquam decernere,

aut

aut si decernimus obtinere ut ratum sit, valebimus. Non sum nescius morem antiquitus fuisse sententiarum varietates Synodorum decretis reprimere: sed cum Synodi, sed cum Clerici separatim, pondus haberent, quo nunc plane carent. Nam hodie quidem plurimis ludus est, immo etiam honori sibi ducunt, nos petulanter frustrari, quanquam nec oderint, nec metuant: quod longe acrius aggredientur, cum intermissa diu consilia renovari intellexerint.

Dicet quis forsan, Regem salutis publicæ & fidei Christianæ studiosissimum, si minus ultro, saltem admonitum, certe ornaturum nos rerum constituendarum potestate, & adversus improborum machinationes in tuto collocaturum. Et quidem talem ovanti patriæ divinitus contigisse ex imo pectore vobis gratulor; Deumque veneror ut possit, quod velle scio, in religionis amorem suos accendere, & ordini nostro debitum honorem conciliare. Sed nec potest omnia, nec inopportuno tempore quidpiam adoriatur, nec iis inconsultis, quorum spectata fide & sapientia merito nititur. Jam hi, bene quidem nobis volunt, ut nemo possit melius: sed rerum suarum, hac præsertim tempestate, satagunt; & inde nostris (nam quid apud vos parcam proloqui?) aliquanto minus dedunt se, quam optandum esset. Metuunt nempe, ne si res bellicas ecclesiasticis cumulent, obruantur negotiorum multitudine. Metuunt etiam, ne quid a nobis, ne quid saltem ab aliis, turbetur. Justo timidiores, vel sane segniores, forsan putabitis, qui talia causentur. Nec intercedo. Habent tamen illa speciem aliquam, qua si capiantur isti, non est nimis indignandum. Et dum solenne illud suum identidem occulant, *quieta non moventur*, mirum ni assentiatur princeps juvenis, magis aliquando sibi nobisque fisurus.

Quin fingamus concessam, quæ expetitur, facultatem. Si pauca tantum, eaque leviora complecteretur, multi nos magno conatu nihil agere dicerent: et cum vel minimis aliquod tempus dandum sit, nostrum non exiguus numerus domum pertæsi dilaberentur, relicta Synodo infrequente & inhonorata. Quod si multa & gravia demandarentur, alii nihil restare integrum clamitarent; & posset evenire, ut in partes ipsi distraheremur. Spero equidem, & amplam spei materiam præbet aspectus vester, sic nos affectos esse, ut ardentiores lenioribus, expertis rerum inexperti, se velint submittere, nemo temere, aut seorsim quidquam inceptare, nemo pertinaciter ur-
gere

gere periculosa vel suspecta. Sed nescio an hæc omnia spondere quis auit: quæ tamen si minus præstabimus, quandoque arcessemur in commune consulturi, opinionum discipantium conflictu incenduntur iræ, scindemur in studia contraria, lateque a nobis manabunt in publicum discordiæ. Hujusmodi multa in civilibus comitiis impune fiunt: in nostris fiebant olim: nunc nemo ferret. Undique incursarent, undique impeterent nos; nec mora, pro imperio edicerent, qui possunt, finem hisce dissidiis actutum quoquo modo esse imponendum. Abrumpenda esset repente tela exorsa; conquererentur bonorum non pauci nostra culpa nihil successisse, sed omnia deteriora facta; & false deriderent nos quotquot sunt alieni, vel a Christiana fide, vel ab hierarchia Anglicana. Quinetiam si nullæ lites orirentur, eo certius malignitatem & livorem quorundam exstimularem. Nam qui maxime dissensionum nos accusant, minime eadem sentire, & bene rem gerere cupiunt.

His de causis, tametsi prorsus arbitrii nostri esset ad negotia capeffenda statim convolare, quid prudentiores existimarent, haud dixerim; ego ampliandum censerem.

Quid ergo? Jubeone vos de Synodo actiosa, deque Ecclesiæ statu per eam emendando, desperare? Absit vero. Semper enitendum est, ut antiqui regiminis non modo retineamus formam, sed et vim instauremus, quatenus vel divino vel humano jure fulcitur. Atque interim manca quodammodo et mutila erit πολιτεία nostra. Hoc tantum caveri velim, ne, quod fieri, vel tuto fieri, nequit, exoptemus; ne audacibus & calidis inceptis faveamus; ne laqueis implicemur, unde expedire nos erit difficile. Hoc tantum commoneo, lentis passibus esse procedendum, cuncta circumspectanda, impedimenta sedulo amolienda, & substernenda diligenter meditatae structuræ firma fundamenta. Non est igitur oratio mea procrastinantis, eludendi causâ, sed in justum tempus differentis. Erit etiam, bona cum venia vestra, præcipientis quo pacto maturabitur quod avemus.

Permagni ad hoc propositum interest, ut simus ipsi, quosque pascimus greges efficiamus, quantum res patitur, unanimes, potissimum in fide salutari. Sunt enim qui se nostros vocant, nihilo tamen secius multa quæ docemus improbant; speciatim, quæ ad S. S. Trinitatem pertinent, ad Redemptionem generis humani, ad illapsum Gratiæ cœlestis in mentes fidelium. Jam
vero

vero si longius proserpserit error sententiam de his receptam repudiantium ; vel si invalescant qui comminiscuntur, præter horum persuasionem, bonorum operum feracem, necessariam esse fiduciam favoris apud Deum, sensibus imis infixam superne, quæ omnem dubitationem tollat : controversiis assiduè vexabimur ; ad Synodos cum effectu celebrandas, *non in melius*, ut Apostoli verbis utar, *sed in deterius conveniemus* *. Nec solum conquassabitur, tandemque dissolvetur hujus Ecclesiæ pulcherrima compages ; quin etiam corrumpetur integritas vitalis doctrinæ, siquidem ego, diu perpensis & subductis, ancipiti quondam animo, rationibus, verum discernere valeo.

Sunt autem porro, qui se minime de Fide a nobis dissentire, aut affirmant, aut videri volunt, sed æquum censent omnibus placita quæcunque propugnantibus ad mensam eucharisticam, atque adeo ad sacros ordines, aditum patere, modo in Christum se credere profiteantur. Sed hoc professi sunt olim Hæreticorum pestilentissimi : ne dicam hodie quadantenus profiteri Mohammedanos. Admittantur ergo, aiunt, ii soli, qui sacras scripturas venerantur, ejusque verbis animorum sensa declarare sunt parati. Quid vero ? Pontificii, Tremulorum secta, innumerarum ineptiarum fautores, nonne in id sunt parati ? Hosne ergo omnes honore fungendi apud nos Sacerdotii dignantur ? Sin minus ; cur alios, pari ratione repellendos ?

Verum hoc saltem Candidatis urgent concedendum, ut suis, non alienis verbis satisfaciant Ecclesiæ Rectoribus : quod et antiquitus usu venisse monent. Atque ita sæpe diuque factum non negamus ; sed idcirco, & merito quidem, fieri desiisse credimus, quod sic Episcoporum quisque, vel oratione subdola, cui discutiendæ spatium non esset, facile falli potuerit, vel pro arbitrio recte sentientibus viam intercludere, prave sentientes admittere : quodque hinc necesse fuerit frequenter evenire, ut eundem hic respueret, ille amplecteretur, et disceptandis litibus inde oriundis una Synodus haud sufficeret.

Esto igitur, idoneos Articulos Fidei in auxilium vocandos : at certe nostros recoquendos, & incudi reddendos, non pauci contendunt. Nec diffitemur potuisse quædam aptius enunciari, et adversus tam argutias quam hallucinationes melius muniri. Sed præclare, ut illis temporibus, instructa & composita

* 1 Cor. xi. 17.

fita sunt omnia: egentque hodie tantum explicatione commoda: non vāfram & veteratoriam intelligo, sed artis grammaticæ criticæque regulis consonam. Nec leve est periculum, ne qui, integris manentibus Articulis, nos ab eorum veramēte descivisse jactitant, *ἐπιποδοῖς* crimen atrociori longe clamore, tristiorique eventu impingant, si medicas iis manus, tanquam malefanis, adhibeamus.

Et hæc eadem velim sibi in memoriam revocent, qui Liturgiam item recenferi reformarique flagitant. Ornatio quidem, accuratio, plenior, brevior, et potest ea fieri & debet: sed modesta tractatione, sed tranquillis hominum animis; non temerariis, qualia vidimus & videmus, ausis, non inter media dissidia, mutuasque suspiciones.

Verum ut de his statuatur, novam saltem Scripturæ versionem desiderari, plurimis videtur: nempe ut populus Christianus ea luce fruatur, quæ faventē Numine oraculis divinis per continuas virorum doctorum vigilias affulsit, hisce 150 annis proxime elapsis, ante quos confecta est Anglica Vulgata. Et quis refragetur honestissimæ petitioni? Sed ad hoc opus post conquistum undique omnigenæ eruditionis apparatus demum accedendum est; atque in eo versandum summa religione, cautela, industria, cura porro inter multos amicissime conspirantes, per longum tempus, dispertita. Prodeunt quotidie certatim interpretes: sed fere proletarii, vel quorum supervacanea diligentia incertiores multo sumus quam dudum. Reviviscit linguæ sanctæ perquam necessaria cognitio: sed justas vires nondum acquisivit, & somniis suis se oblectant quidam ejus cultores. Expectandum ideo, si aliquid operâ dignum facere volumus, donec hi aut resipuerint, aut erroris manifesti sint, donec deferbuerit novorum sensuum eruendorum æstus, & nupera hæc pene dixeram rabies emendandi, qua impelluntur ut mendis imprudenter referciant codicem sacrum homines probi, nec ineruditi; donec denique exitum aliquem habeat laudandum apprime institutum conferendi inter se, & cum primævis interpretationibus, Veteris Testamenti libros Hebraice scriptos.

Ego sane in omnibus, de quibus dixi, labores vel maximos, quantum patitur ingravescens & jam fere præceps ætas, pro Ecclesiæ bono, non detrectem, nec offensiones reformidem. Sed minime velim eorum suscipiendorum auctor esse, unde magis
gliscant

gliscant nimiae jampridem rixae. Nam his vigentibus prote-
labitur usque Synodi conventus efficax, ne nobis permixti bella
intestina fuscitemus, publicis commodis nocitura. Quod si
semel satis concordēs videamur, minuetur iste, qui penitus,
quanquam injuria, in virorum summorum animis infedit, me-
tus: quem et omnino depulsum fore sperari potest, modo pa-
lam faciamus nos in omnes, utcunque diversa sentientes, be-
nevole animatos esse, ut quidem sumus. Quotusquisque enim
est nostrum, quin hanc rem sic secum reputet? "Errat quis-
piam; mirum ni et ego: sed aut vocabulo tantum, aut si
re, innoxie. Errat vehementer: sed non continuo est Hæ-
reticus. Hæreticus est: sed Christianus tamen. Ne Chris-
tianus quidem: sed Homo saltem. Homo malus forsitan:
sed qui poterit in melius mutari. Fac denique non posse:
Deus vindicabit." Nec idcirco aut flagitiis inquinati, aut
sanorum verborum formulæ pertinaciter adversantes, non sunt
a cœtu piorum segregandi. Sed in metiorem partem, tam
dictis, tum factis, est propendendum: nec eadem nobis ho-
muncionibus, quæ Apostolis falli nesciis fuit, auctoritas arro-
ganda est. Etenim longe tutius erit finire ut zizania tantis-
per cum tritico succrescant, quam eos ejicere, quos tandem
Judex communis, magno cum nostro dedecore, postliminio re-
stituent. Et qui severius agi postulant, imbecillitatis suæ sunt
immemores: nec vident quod est apertissimum, hac via peri-
culose concussum, forsan etiam eversum, iri, quam stabilitum
eunt Ecclesiam.

Nec tamen, ut gaudeamus tranquillitate, rerum theologica-
rum studia sunt remittenda: sed excitanda ex diuturno quo
languent torpore. Non est hæc ætas nostra legendis, præser-
tim antiquioribus, aut gravioris argumenti, libris, nedum at-
tentæ cogitationi, vel scriptioni operosæ, satis dedita. Olim
tractatibus omnium generum, doctrina, judicio, acumine con-
spicuis, inclaruimus: nunc non exaruit quidem, sed arefcit,
uberrimus ille laudum fons. Olim contra Infideles, Pontifi-
cios, oppugnatores quoscunque, summa cum gloria militavi-
mus: quorum venenatis voluminibus, domi forisque assatim
editis, nunc parum aut nihil reponimus: unde illis famæ ce-
lebritas, & discipulorum multitudo; nobis opprobrium. Nec
utique existimabitur illos, quorum pauci quidquam separatim
præstant, multum præstituros in Synodum convocatos. Video
quid possit obtendi: & sponte fateor, prospiciendum esse, nam

concreditum est, nobis qui dicimur Beneficiorum Patroni, ne eruditæ diligentiae præmia defint. Dandum fane aliquid hac in re, ut in omnibus, cognationi, honestis ministeriis, precibus amicorum, potentiorum commendationibus, iussa verius vocaverim: sed nullatenus tantum, vel ut mali, vel plane inhabiles, admittantur ad sacra munia, vel neglecti jaceant boni & litterati. Quod utinam plures se exhiberent, qui studiis recte positis, et eorum fructibus in lucem prolatis, omnem nobis excusationem præriperent, si quando in minus merentes largius æquo simus benefici.

Quanto autem quis est vel doctrina ornatior, vel conditione superior, tanto oportebit, hoc potissimum sæculo, ut se gerat submissius. Officii pastoralis dignitatem, in qua constituti sumus, assidue suspicere & tueri debemus: verum si amplificare aggredimur incerte, imminuemus non mediocriter. Neque ecclesiastica, neque civilia, quibus potimur, abjudicare jura, aut licet aut expedit: nam qui illis nosmet ultro exuentes collaudare nos non desinent, exutos ridebunt. Sed si justam auctoritatem conservare volumus, ante omnia cavendum est, ne immodicam vindicemus. Alioquin magis atque magis in angustum coercebimur: et demum exilis illa, quæ restat, umbra regiminis eripietur, summa cum plurimorum aspernatione.

Nec indecore appetentes erimus, (modo sapere, et bene audire, atque adhiberi seriis negotiis cordi est) aut dulcis lucelli, aut gradus cujusslibet altioris. Non sunt, experto credite, non sunt tanti vel honores vel redditus amplissimi Ecclesiasticis destinati, ut a quopiam enixe cupiantur. Multum habent sollicitudinis, non parum forsan invidiæ; veræ delectationis nihil, nisi quoties occurrit, occurrit autem raro insignis, benefaciendi occasio.

Voluptates, etiam honestiores, parcè usurpare, nec a vituperandis tantummodo, sed a contemnendis vel parvi faciendis, abstinere se, ad existimationem Clericorum interest quam maxime. Si quos e nobis videant Laici, potiorum & ciborum lautitiis indulgentes, corporis cultui & vestium elegantiae præter modum addictos, in facetias & risum perpetuo solutos, muliercularum chartis lusoriis continenter inhiantium circulis & scissiunculis permixtos, vel inter quascunque nugas inertis otio fugaces horas disperdentes, nunquam se persuaderi finent, ut ex frequentissimo talium concilio boni quidpiam proficisci possesperent:

sperent: quales tamen si aliquot nostrum comperiant, ceteros ejusdem farinae libenter sibi fingent.

Sed minime satis erit vitam agere cætera inculpatam, nisi in docendo quoque Evangelio, quod munus est nostrum, parvi & ampli gnaviter elaboremus. Quo effrænati luxuriantur errores & vitia, quo laxior est Ecclesiæ disciplina, quo lenior administratio Reipublicæ, eo diligentiores adhiberi oportet in fide & preceptis Christianis institutionem: & incassum ad industriam hortabimur Sacerdotes inferioris ordinis, nisi exemplo præeamus. Potuimus non ita pridem impetrare, ut delinquentes in bonos mores Magistratui pœnas darent; ut libri impii & impudici e medio tollerentur: nunc illud ægre conceditur; hoc, sciens loquor, neutiquam. Est ideo vel sola vi argumentorum, præsertim in sacris concionibus, obfistendum adversariis, vel cedendum loco. Et cum præter adversarios veteres, novi & domestici nuper ex ipso Academiæ nostratium sinu profiluerint, qui se solos æternæ salutis trami-tem commonstrare, nos in perniciem cæcorum more evagari, passim prædicant, curatissime dispiciendum est, ut recto cursu veritatis viam insistamus; horum nec astutiis illecti, nec timore perculsi, nec odio flagrant: cavendum, ne, si illi sermones suos ad vulgi captum nimis acomodant, ac demittunt, nos hoc nimis dedignemur; ne, si illi sunt justo vehementiores, nos frigidi videamur, & affectuum piorum expertes: ne si illi efficaciam Fidei immorderatè cum maximo fidelium periculo extollunt, nos non minori ingrate eam deprimamus & extenuemus; ne si illi inania visa et phantasmata pro certis pignoribus Remissionis Peccatorum habent, nos in genuinum Spiritus Sancti testimonium finis imprudenter contumeliosi.

Egone igitur Clerum Anglicanum officii vel male intellecti, vel male præstiti, tecte insimulo? Deus meliora. Quis potest ut vituperem quos diligo et reveor; quorum plurimorum, cum vita functorum tum superstitum, amicitia diu gavi-
sus sum; & exempla mihi quotidie ob oculos pono, ut ad recte vivendum docendumque me erigam & confirmem? Sed vos auditoribus vestris, etiamsi summa laude dignis, monitiones tamen sollicitè ingeritis. Nam vel sapientes Virgines dormitasse legimus*: *thesaurum evangelicum in vasis fictilibus habemus*:

Ff 2

mus:

* Matth. xxv 5.

*mus**: & difficile est a moribus hodiernis aliquid contagionis & labis non trahere. Ignoscat Pater misericors, quod Paræciis primo, deinde Diœcesibus mihi ordine commissis, minus intente & perite, quam oportuerat, invigilaverim! Ignoscat pariter, si quid simile cuiquam vestrum contigerit! Illud autem statuamus universi, aucto sollicito studio, compensare pro virili (nunquam enim fiet fatis) quicquid peccavimus: idque eo certe potissimum, ut nos Deo commendemus; partim vero etiam, ut hominibus.

Neque enim ferent in Clericis illa, quorum facile sibi invicem dant veniam. Quod si *nobis & doctrinæ*, ex Apostoli præcepto, *attendamus*†; nequit fieri, quin gradatim in altum recrescat existimatio nostra; quin perspiciant quotidie clarius, quibus rerum habenæ sunt traditæ, quot quantisque in rebus operâ nostra uti possunt; quin tandem non modo concedant, verum et Reipublicæ causa invitent rogentque, ut quæ ecclesiæ defunt communi consilio suppleamus. Longa quidem est hæc via atque ardua: sed est ad ea quæ volumus, aut velle debemus, unica; & quas fortasse indicabunt alii compendiarias, in salebrosos ducunt et præcipites locos. His artibus floruerunt primorum sæculorum Doctores: his iisdem nobis fidentum est: aliarum ope non dabitur in honore esse: vel si maxime daretur, aliarum ope nec inserviremus hominum utilitati, nec æternam vitam consequeremur.

Tarde et cunctanter credo, quicquid faciemus, de nobis honorificè plerique sentient. Iracundæ tamen querimoniæ multum aberit ut proficiant; quorundam animos malevolo gaudio perfundent; alios movebunt, ut quos contemnunt, etiam oderint. Accusati vicissim accusabunt: et coram iniquis iudicibus causa nobis erit decenda. Nec sane proderit vehemens negotiorum civilium tractandorum studium conspiciendum dare. Ferventiores enim hancce cupiditatem, ad privata spectare emolumenta, non ad communia, perhibebunt suspicaces & maligni, vulgus credet. Quæ nostra sunt ergo rite peragentes, eventum, quem daturus est Deus, tranquille expectemus. Viros bonos colamus, quamvis minime nobiscum in omnibus consentiant: impiis ne focii quidem simus, nedum adulescentes; nec tamen temere offensiones demus, sed necessariam

* 2 Cor. iv. 7.

† 1 Tim. iv. 16.

riam reprehensionum injucunditatem verborum humanitate mitigemus; modicum aliis non inviti permittamus illorum usum, licita modo sint, quæ ipsi non attingimus: ab omni concertatione longissime abhorreamus: injurias & opprobria toleranter patiamur: favore, ex quacunque demum parte affulserit, utamur modeste. Hoc modo nec novas contrahemus inimicitias, et majorum delicta aut non luemus amplius, aut luemus immeriti.

In utramque idcirco partem parati sumus. Rerum sacrarum, et, quotquot aliquo vinculo cum his connexæ sunt, civilium, scientia sic nos instruamus, quasi brevi essemus de quaestionibus gravissimis deliberationes habituri: compositi tamen interim ad summam æquitatem & mansuetudinem, si vel in longissimum diem spes illa prorogetur: qua si penitus frustreretur, dolebimus quidem sæculi, male et sibi consulentis, & nobis gratiam referentis, sive iniquitatem sive incogitantiam; hoc vero nostrâ culpa non obtigisse, toto pectore lætabimur; nec spernendum nihilominus per nos incrementum capiet res Christiana. In Synodo sententiam non dicemus; sed seorsim constanter quod verum atque decens propugnabimus. Canones non condemus; sed ut omnes omnia sua ad Canonem Sacri Fœderis exigant, tam verbis quam exemplo suadebimus. Anathematum fulminibus heterodoxos non feriemus: (atque utinam ab odiosis ejusmodi & appellationibus & inceptis temperavissent sibi Decessores nostri:) sed *cum modestia*, Divo Paulo edicante, *corripiemus eos qui resistunt, ne quando Deus det illis penitentiam ad cognoscendam veritatem**. In Clericos vitiis contaminatos aut vecordes non exercebimus communiter censuram: sed ne locum inveniant apud nos, cura privata quantum licet præcavebimus. Libros infames carbone haud notabimus, unde avidius legerentur; sed accurate refellemus. Et quamvis dubio careret, indies imminutam his in oris, atque tandem extinctam, fore cœlestem Evangelii lucem: illachrymandum quidem esset popularibus nostris misere pereuntibus; in voluntate tamen divina non gravatim acquiescendum. Quid enim Propheta? *In vacuum laboravi, & vane fortitudinem meam consumpsi: ergo judicium meum cum Domino, & opus meum cum Deo meo*†.

Condonate

* 2 Tim. ii. 25.

† Esai. xlix. 4.

Condonate mihi, Patres Fratresque, longi hujus alloquii tædium ; ex hac Cathedra nunc primum, nunc itidem postremum, (sic enim præfagit mens, & verisimile est) vos compellanti. *Tuque, omnipotens et sempiternæ Deus, cujus Spiritu universum ecclesiæ corpus regitur sanctumque efficitur, supplicationes & preces nostras, pro cujuscunque ordinis hominibus, qui in Ecclesiam tuam cooptantur, oblatas tibi admitte ; ut quisque, sicut suæ convenit vocationi & ministerio, tibi sincere & pie serviat, per Dominum & Servatorem nostrum Jesum Christum. Amen*.*

* Collect. 2. Parascev.

LEC-

LECTURES.

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTION.

IN all matters of importance, every one that wants information, should first seek for it, then attend to it: and the more our happiness depends upon judging and acting right in any case, the more care and pains we should take to qualify ourselves for both. Now the happiness of all persons depends beyond comparison chiefly on being truly religious. For true religion consists in three things; reasonable government of ourselves, good behaviour towards our fellow-creatures, and dutifulness to our Maker: the practice of which will give us, for the most part, health of body and ease of mind, a comfortable provision of necessaries, and peace with all around us; but however, will always secure to us, what is infinitely more valuable still, the favour and blessing of God; who, on these terms, will both watch over us continually with a fatherly kindness in this life, and bestow on us eternal felicity in the next.

Since, therefore, whoever is religious must be happy, the great concern of every one of us is to know and observe the doctrines and rules which religion delivers. Now we all come into the world ignorant of these; and our faculties are so weak at first, and gain strength so slowly; and the attention of our early years to serious things is so small, that even were our duty to comprehend no more than our own reason could teach us, few, if any, would learn it sufficiently without assistance; and

and none so soon as they would need it. They would come out into a world full of dangers, every way unprepared for avoiding them; would go wrong in the very beginning of life, perhaps fatally: at least would hurt, if they did not ruin themselves; and make their return into the right path certainly difficult, and probably late.

But we must consider yet further, that reason, were it improved to the utmost, cannot discover to us all that we are to believe and do: but a large and most important part of it is to be learnt from the revelation made to us in God's holy word. And this, though perfectly well suited to purposes for which it was designed, yet being originally delivered at very distant times, to very different sorts of persons, on very different occasions; and the several articles of faith and precepts of conduct, which it prescribes, not being collected and laid down methodically in any one part of it, but dispersed with irregular beauty through the whole, as the riches of nature are through the creation; the informations of the more knowing must be in many respects needful, to prepare the more ignorant for receiving the benefits, of which they are capable from reading the scripture. And particularly, giving them beforehand a summary and orderly view of the principal points comprehended in it, will qualify them better than any other thing to discern its true meaning, so far as is requisite, in each part.

Therefore, both in what reason of itself dictates, and what God hath added to it, instruction is necessary, especially for beginners. And indeed, as they are never left to find out by their own abilities any other sort of useful knowledge, but always helped, if possible; it would be very strange, if, in the most important kind, the same care at least were not taken.

But besides enlightening the ignorance of persons, instruction doth equal, if not greater, service, by preventing or opposing their prejudices and partialities. From our tenderest age we have our wrong inclinations, and are very prone to form wrong notions in support of them; both which we are extremely backward to acknowledge, and very apt to model our religion in such manner as to leave room for our faults. Now right explanations clearly delivered, and right admonitions pressed home, in early days, may preserve persons from

thus deceiving themselves, and guard them against future, as well as present dangers. Nay, though slighted, and seemingly forgotten for a time, they may still keep secretly such a hold upon the mind as will sooner or later bring those back, who would else never have seen, or never have owned, that they had lost their way.

But a still further advantage of instruction is, that bringing frequently before persons eyes those truths on which otherwise they would seldom reflect, though ever so much convinced of them, it keeps the thoughts of their duty continually at hand, to resist the temptations with which they are attacked. Thus their lives and their minds are insensibly formed to be such as they ought; and being thus *trained up in the way wherein they should go*, there is great hope, that *they will not afterwards depart from it**.

Nor doth reason only, but experience too, shew the need of timely institution in piety and virtue. For is it not visible, that principally for want of it, multitudes of unhappy creatures, in all ranks of life, set out from the first in sin, and follow it on as securely, as if it were the only way they had to take; do unspeakable mischief in the world, and utterly undo themselves, body and soul: whilst others, of no better natural dispositions, but only better taught, are harmless and useful, esteemed and honoured, go through life with comfort, and meet death with joyful hope? There are doubtless, in such numbers, exceptions on both sides; but this is undeniably the ordinary, the probable, the always to be expected course of things. Therefore seriously consider, will you despise religious knowledge, and be like the former miserable wretches? or will you embrace it, and be happy with the latter, here and to eternity.

But it is not sufficient that you be willing to receive instruction, unless they also, to whom that care belongs, are willing to give it. Now the care of giving it belongs to different persons in different cases. In the case of children, it usually belongs, in a peculiar degree, to their parents; who, having been the means of bringing them into the world, are most strongly bound to endeavour that their being may prove a benefit, not a cause of lamentation to them; and having been

endued by Heaven with tender affections towards them, will be doubly sinners against them, if they are guilty of that worst of cruelty, not teaching them their duty: without which also, and it deserves a very serious consideration, they can no more hope for comfort in them here, than for acceptance with God hereafter. And therefore, both the Old Testament directed the Jews, to *teach their children diligently the words which God had commanded them* *; and the New enjoins Christians to *bring up theirs in the nurture and admonition of the Lord* †. Sometimes indeed want of leisure, sometimes of knowledge and ability, obliges parents to commit part, it may be a considerable one, of the instruction of their children to other persons. But far from being ever discharged of the whole burthen, they must always remember, that unless they assist and enforce what others endeavour, it will seldom produce any valuable effect; and much less, if some of the things, which their children hear them say, and see them do almost every day, are directly contrary to those, which they pretend they would have them believe and learn.

The persons on whom usually this care is devolved by parents, are masters and mistresses of schools, and afterwards tutors in colleges, who ought never to omit furnishing children, amongst other knowledge, plentifully with that which is the most necessary of all; but constantly to employ the influence which they have on their minds, and the knowledge which they acquire of their tempers, in exciting them to good, and preserving them from evil, as much as they can: And parents ought first absolutely to require this of them, and then examine diligently from time to time whether it be done. But especially masters and mistresses of charity-schools, which are founded purposely to give the children of the poor an early and deep tincture of religion and virtue, should look upon it as by far their principal business to teach them, not merely outward observances and forms of good words, but such an inward sense and love of their duty to God and man, as may secure them, if possible, from that lamentable depravity, into which the lower part of the world is falling; and which it is highly the interest of their superiors, if they would but understand their interest, to restrain and correct.

As

* Deut. vi. 6, 7.

† Eph. vi. 4.

As the care of children belongs to their parents and teachers ; so doth that of servants to the heads of the families in which they live. And therefore it is mentioned in scripture by God himself, as a distinguishing part of the character of a good man, *that he will command his household to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment**. For indeed it is a strong and requisite proof of reverence to our Maker, as well as of kindness to them, and concern for our own interest, to direct them in the way of their duty, or procure them the direction of good books and good advice ; to exhort them to the more private exercises of religion ; to contrive leisure for them to attend the appointed solemn ones, which is plainly one part of *giving them*, as the Apostle requires, *what is just and equal†* ; and to see that the leisure, allowed them for that purpose, be honestly so employed, and not abused.

For, after all, the most valuable instruction for servants, for children, for all persons, is the public one of the church, which our Saviour himself hath promised to bless with his presence‡. And therefore it is a rule of inexpressible moment : *Gather the people together ; men, women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates : that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God ; and observe to do all the words of his law : and that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live§*.

Whoever else may fail of doing their duty, we, the ministers of Christ, must not fail to *be instant in season and out of season ||* ; to feed the young with *the sincere milk of the word ¶*, and *preach the gospel to the poor **. It is the peculiar glory of Christianity, to have extended religious instruction, of which but few partook at all before, and scarce any in purity, thro' all ranks and ages of men and even women. The first converts to it were immediately formed into regular societies and assemblies ; not only for the joint worship of God, but the further *edifying of the body of Christ †* : in which good work, some of course were stated teachers, or, to use the Apostle's own expression, *catechizers in the word* ; others, taught or ca-

G g 2

techized.

* Gen. xviii. 19.

† Colos. iv. 1.

‡ Matth. xviii. 20.

§ Deut. xxxi. 12, 13.

|| 2 Tim. iv. 2.

¶ 1 Pet. ii. 2.

* Matth. xi. 5.

† Eph. iv. 12.

techized*. For catechizing signifies in scripture, at large, instructing persons in any matter, but especially in religion. And thus it is used, Acts xviii. 25. where you read, *This man was instructed in the way of the Lord*; and Luke i. 4. where again you read, *That thou mayest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed*. The original word, in both places, is *catechized*.

But as the different advances of persons in knowledge made different sorts of instructions requisite; so in the primitive church, different sorts of teachers were appointed to dispense it. And they who taught so much only of the Christian doctrine, as might qualify the hearers for Christian communion, had the name of Catechists appropriated to them: whose teaching being usually, as was most convenient, in a great measure by way of question and answer; the name of Catechism hath now been long confined to such instruction, as is given in that form. But the method of employing a particular set of men in that work only, is in most places laid aside. And I hope you will not be losers, if they who are appointed to the higher ministries of the church attend to this also.

Under the darkness of Popery almost all religious instruction was neglected. *Very few, to use the words of one of our Homilies, even of the most simple people, were taught the Lord's Prayer, the Articles of the Faith, or the ten commandments, otherwise than in Latin, which they understood not*†; so that one of the first necessary steps taken towards the Reformation, in this country, was a general injunction, that parents and masters should first learn them in their own tongue, then acquaint their children and servants with them‡: which three main branches of Christian duty, comprehending the sum of what we are to believe, to do, and to petition for, were soon after formed, with proper explanations of each, into a catechism. To this was added, in process of time, a brief account of the two sacraments; all together making up that very good, though still improveable, *Form of sound words*§, which we now use.

And that it may be used effectually, the laws of the land, both ecclesiastical and civil, require not only ministers to instruct their parishioners in it, but parents, and masters and mistresses

* Gal. vi. 6.

† Homily against Rebellion, part 6.

‡ See Wake's Dedication of his Commentary on the Church Catechism.

§ 2 Tim. i. 13.

mistresses of families, to send their children and servants to be instructed ; meaning evidently, unless they made some other more convenient provision to answer the same end. For promoting religious knowledge and practice is not only the express design of all church government, but a matter (would God it were well considered) of great importance to the state also : since neither private life can be happy, nor the public welfare secure for any long time, without that belief of the doctrines and observance of the duties of Christianity, for which catechizing the young and ignorant lays the firmest foundation.

It must be owned, the Catechism of our Church is, as it ought to be, so clear in the main, as to need but little explaining, all things considered. But then it is also, as it ought to be, so short, as to leave much room for setting forth the particulars comprehended under its general heads ; for confirming both these by reason and scripture ; and for imprinting the whole on the consciences and affections of the learners. This therefore I shall endeavour to do in the sequel of these discourses, as clearly and familiarly as I am able.

In the nature of the thing, nothing new or curious ought to have any place in such an exposition, as indeed such matters ought to have little place in any public teaching of God's word : but least of all, where only the plain fundamental truths of our common faith are to be taught, confirmed, and recommended in a plain way. And yet, as these truths are of all others the most necessary ; the plainest things that can be said about them, may deserve the attention of all sorts of persons ; especially as it is but too possible, that some of all sorts may never have been taught sufficiently even the first principles of religion, and that many may by no means have sufficiently retained, and considered since, what they learnt in their early years ; but preserving scarce more in their minds than the bare words, if so much, may be little the better, if at all, for the lessons of their childhood. To which it might be added, that every one hath need, in a greater degree or a less, if not to be informed, yet to be reminded and excited.

Let me beg therefore, that all who have cause to hope they may receive benefit, would attend when they are able : and that all who have children or servants would bring or send them.

them. This is not a day of business. It ought not to be a day of idle amusements. It is appointed for the public worship of God, and learning of his will. This is one of the hours of his worship: it is that part of the day in which you are most of you more at liberty, than you are in any other. And what will you say for yourselves hereafter, if when you have the most intire leisure, you chuse rather to do any thing or nothing, than to serve your Maker, and improve in the knowledge of your duty? Never was there more danger of being infected with evil of every sort from conversation in the world. Surely then you should endeavour to fortify yourselves, and those who belong to you, with proper antidotes against it. And where will you find better than in the house of God? But particularly, I both charge and beg you, children, to mark diligently what I shall say to you: for all that you learn by rote will be of no use, unless you learn also to understand it. The exposition, which you are taught along with your catechism, will help your understanding very much, if you mind it as you ought: and what you will hear from me may be a yet farther help. For, tho' there should be some things in it above your capacities, yet I shall endeavour to the best of my power, that most things may be easy and plain to you. And, I entreat you, take care that they be not lost upon you. You are soon going out into the world, where you will hear and see abundance of what is evil. For Christ's sake lay in as much good, in the mean while, as you can, to guard against it.

But indeed it behoves us all, of whatever age or station we be, to remember, that the belief and practice of true religion are what we are every one equally concerned in. For without them, the greatest person upon earth will, in a very few years, be completely miserable: and with them, the meanest will be eternally happy. *O hear ye this, all ye people; ponder it, all ye that dwell in the world; high and low, rich and poor, one with another**. *Apply your hearts to instruction, and your ears to the words of knowledge†. For whoso findeth wisdom, findeth life; and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against her, wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate her, love death‡.*

* Psal. xlix. 1, 2.

† Prov. xxiii. 12.

‡ Prov. viii. 35, 36.

LECTURE II.

Privileges of Baptism.

THE Catechism of our Church begins, with a prudent condescension and familiarity, by asking the introductory questions, *What is your name?* and, *Who gave you this name?* which lead very naturally the person catechized to the mention of his baptism, at which time it was given him. Not that giving a name is any necessary part of baptism; but might have been done either before or afterwards, though it hath always been done then, as indeed it was likely that the first public opportunity would be taken for that purpose. But besides, it was no uncommon thing in ancient times, that when a person entered into the service of a new master, he had a new name bestowed on him. Whence perhaps the Jews might derive the practice of naming the child, when it was circumcised; it being then devoted to the service of God. The first Christians, in imitation of them would of course do the same thing, for the same reason, when it was baptized: and no wonder, that we continue the practice. For it might be a very useful one, if persons would but remember, what it tends to remind them of, that they were dedicated to Christ, when their Christian name was given them; and would make use of that circumstance frequently to recollect those promises, which were then solemnly made for them; and which they have since confirmed, or are to confirm and make personally for themselves. Without performing these we are Christians, not in deed, but in name only: and shall greatly dishonour that name, while we bear it and boast of it.

Our baptismal name is given us, not by our parents, as we read in scripture the name of Jewish children was, but by our godfathers and godmothers. And this custom also may have a double advantage. It may admonish them, that having conferred the title of Christians upon us, they are bound to endeavour, that we may behave worthily of it. And it may admonish us, that our name having been given us by persons, who were our sureties, we are bound to make good their engagement.

But the office and use of godfathers will be considered under one of the following questions. The subject to be considered

dered at present, though not fully, is baptism. For this being our first entrance into the Christian Church, by which we become intitled to certain privileges, and obliged to certain duties; religious instruction begins very properly by teaching young persons, what both of them are. And in order to recommend the duties to us, the privileges are mentioned first.

Not but that God hath an absolute right to our observance of his laws, without informing us beforehand, what benefit we shall reap from it. Surely it would be enough to know, that he is Lord and King of the whole earth; and that all his dealings with the works of his hands are just and reasonable. Our business is to obey, and trust him with the consequences. But in great mercy, to encourage and attract his poor creatures, he hath been pleased to enter into a covenant, a gracious agreement with man: subjecting himself, as it were, to bestow certain blessings on us, provided we perform certain conditions. But though, in this covenant, the promises, made on his part, flow from his own free goodness; yet the terms, required on ours, are matter of necessary obligation: and what was altogether voluntary in him, firmly binds us*.

Now the privileges thus conditionally secured to us in baptism, we find in our catechism very fitly reduced to these three heads: that the person who receives it, is *therein made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.*

1. The first, and foundation of the others, is, that he is *made a member of Christ.* This figure of speech all of you may not immediately understand: but when it is understood, you will perceive in it great strength and beauty. It presupposes, what we must be sensible of, more or less, that we are every one originally prone to sin, and actually sinners; liable thence to punishment; and without hope of preserving ourselves, by our own strength, either from guilt or from misery. It further implies, what the scripture clearly teaches, that Jesus Christ hath delivered us from both, in such manner as shall hereafter be explained to you, on the most equitable terms of our becoming his, by accepting him from the hand of God for our Saviour, our Teacher, and our Lord. This union to him,

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* See Waterland's Review of the doctrine of the Eucharist, c. xi. p. 425.

him, in order to receive these benefits from him, our Catechism, in conformity with the language of holy writ, compares with that of the members of the body to the head. And how proper the comparison is, will easily appear by carrying it through the several particulars, in which the similitude holds.

As, in every living creature, perception and motion proceed from the head; so, to every Christian, knowledge of God's will, and power to obey it, flow from Christ. As the head governs and directs each limb, so Christ is the Sovereign and Law-giver of each believer. As being joined to the head makes the whole body one animal frame; so being joined to Christ makes the whole number of Christians one spiritual society. As communication with the head preserves our natural life; so communion with Christ supports our religious life. He therefore is to the Church what the head is to the body: and each person who belongs to the Church, is a member of that body, or, in the language of the catechism, *a member of Christ*. For he, as St Paul expresses it, is *the Head: from which all the body, having nourishment ministered, and knit together by joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God**.

And this manner of speaking is frequently repeated in scripture, as it well deserves; being not only, as you have seen, admirably fitted to represent the happy relations, in which we stand to our Redeemer, but also to remind us of the duties, which are derived from them: of the honour and obedience due to him, who is *Head over all things to his body, the Church†*; of our continual dependence on him, *since he is our life‡*; and of the tenderness and kindness, which we owe to our fellow-Christians, and they to us, being all united, through him, so intimately to each other. For since, as the apostle argues, *by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body: as in the natural body, the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee, nor any one member to the rest, I have no need of you; but even the more feeble and less honourable members are necessary§*: so in the spiritual body, they, who in any respect may seem to excel others, ought by no means to despise them; since every good Christian is, in his proper degree and place, both a va-

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luable

* Col. ii. 19.

† Eph. i. 22, 23.

‡ Col. iii. 4.

§ 1 Cor. xii. 13, 21, 22, 23.

luable and an useful *member of Christ*. And again, as in the natural body, there is a connection and sympathy of the several parts; by which the good state of one preserves the others in health and ease, or its bad state gives them pain and disorder; so should there be in the spiritual body, and there is in all true members of it, a mutual caution not to do harm to each other, and a mutual desire of each others benefit. *If one member suffer, all the other members should by a compassionate temper suffer with it; and if one member be honoured, all the rest should sincerely rejoice with it* *. Think then, do you feel in your hearts this good disposition, as a mark of being members of Christ? If not, study to form yourselves to it without delay.

2. The second privilege of baptism is, that by it *we are made the children of God*, in a sense and manner, in which by nature we are not so.

Our blessed Saviour indeed is called in scripture *the only begotten Son of God*. Nor can the highest of creatures claim God for his Father by the same right that he doth. But in a lower sense, God is the Father of angels and men; whom he hath created in their several degrees of likeness to his own image. Adam, our first parent, was the son of God by a strong resemblance to his heavenly Father in original uprightness. But as this similitude was greatly obscured both in him and in his descendants by the fall, though preserved by the covenant of the promised Seed from being utterly effaced; so in time it was almost entirely lost among men, by the prevalence of sin; and they became in general *enemies of God* †, and *children of the devil* ‡.

But our gracious Maker, pitying us notwithstanding, and treating us like children, even when thus degenerated, hath mercifully appointed a method for adopting us into his family again, after we have cast ourselves out of it; and for restoring and raising us gradually to the same and greater likeness to him and favour with him, than even our first parents ever enjoyed. Now this inestimable blessing was procured for mankind through the means of Jesus Christ; and we become intitled to it by taking him for our head, and becoming his members, in such manner, as you have heard briefly explained.

* 1 Cor. xii. 26.

† Rom. v. 10. Col. i. 21.

‡ 1 John iii. 10.

ed. For to as many as receives him, to them gives he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name *. Being therefore thus united to him, who is in the highest sense the Son of God; and claiming not in our own name, but under him; we are admitted again into such a degree of sonship as we are capable of; and made *the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ* †.

Indeed not only Christians, but the Jews, are called in scripture *the children of God* ‡; and such they really were; being first, as Christians were afterwards, the *children of his covenant* §. But still, as theirs was a state of less knowledge, more burthenfome precepts, and stricter government; the apostle speaks of them, compared with us, only as servants in his family. Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all. Even so we, speaking of the Jewish nation, when we were children, unqualified for any great degrees of liberty, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son to redeem them that were under the law. Wherefore we are no more servants but sons ||. Behold, then, as St John expresses it, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, in this distinguished sense, the sons of God ¶: especially considering the consequence drawn by St Paul, *If children, then heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ* *: which is the

Third and last privilege of baptism, and completes the value of it, that by entering into the Christian covenant we are made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; that is, intitled to perfect and endless happiness in body and soul. Had we continued in the primitive uprightness of our first parents, and never sinned at all, we could have had no claim, but from God's free promise, to any thing more, than that our being should not be worse to us than not being. But as we are originally depraved, and have actually sinned, far from having any claim to happiness, we are liable to just punishment for ever. And least of all could we have any claim to such happiness, as eternal life and glory. But blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: who of his abundant mercy hath begotten us a-

H h 2

gain

* John i. 12. † Gal. iii. 26. ‡ Deut. xiv. 1. § Acts iii. 25.

|| Gal. iv. 1, 3, 4, 7. ¶ 1 John iii. 1. * Rom. viii. 17.

gain unto a lively hope; to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us*.

These then are the privileges of the Christian covenant. As for those, who have no knowledge of that covenant; the Apostle hath told us indeed, that *as many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law*†: but he hath told us also, that *when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, they are a law unto themselves*‡. And whether none of them shall attain to any degree of a better life, is no concern of ours; who may well be contented with the assurance, that our own lot will be a happy one beyond all comparison, if we please. He, who hath shown the abundance of his love to us, will undoubtedly show, not only his justice, but his mercy, to all the works of his hands, as far, and in such manner as is fit. There is indeed *none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved*, but that of *Jesus Christ*§. But whether they, who have not had in this life the means of calling upon it, shall receive any benefit from him; or if any, what and how; as neither scripture hath told us, nor reason can tell us, it is presumptuous to determine, and useless to inquire.

The points to which we must attend, are those which relate to ourselves: that we *give due thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*||; and be duly careful to *walk worthy of God, who hath called us into his kingdom and glory*¶. For we have a right to the privileges of the covenant, only on the supposition and presumption of our performing the obligations of it. Children indeed of believers, who are taken out of the world before they become capable of faith and obedience, we doubt not, are happy. For the general declarations of holy writ plainly comprehend their case: and our Saviour hath particularly declared, that *of such is the kingdom of God**. But all who live to maturer years; as, on the one hand, they may intitle themselves, through God's bountiful promise, though not their own merit, to higher degrees of future felicity, in proportion as their service hath been considerable; so on the other, they are intitled to no degree at all, any longer than they practise that

holiness,

* 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. † Rom. ii. 12. ‡ Ibid. viii. 14. § Acts iv. 10, 12.

|| Col. i. 12. ¶ 1 Thess. ii. 12. * Mark x. 14. Luke xviii. 16.

holiness, in which they have engaged to live, and *without* which *no man shall see the Lord* *. We shall be acknowledged as children, only whilst we obey our heavenly Father : and *the baptism which saveth us, is not the outward putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the inward answer of a good conscience towards God* †. Which therefore that we may all of us be able always to make, may he of his infinite mercy grant, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LECTURE III.

Renunciation in Baptism.

AFTER the privileges, to which Baptism gives us a claim, our catechism proceeds to set forth the duties, to which it binds us : those things, *which our godfathers and godmothers promised and vowed in our names*. For without the performance of these conditions, neither hath God engaged, nor is it consistent with the holiness of his nature and the honour of his government, to bestow such benefits upon us : nor indeed shall we be capable of receiving them. For a virtuous and religious temper and behaviour here, is absolutely requisite, not only to intitle, but to qualify and prepare us for a virtuous and religious blessedness hereafter, such as that of heaven is.

Now these conditions, or obligations on our part, are three : that we renounce what God forbids ; that we believe what he teaches, and do what he commands : or, in other words, repentance, faith, and obedience. These things are plainly necessary ; and they are plainly all that is necessary : for as, through the grace of God, we have them in our power ; so we have nothing more. And therefore they have been constantly,

* Heb. xii. 14.

† 1 Pet. iii. 21.

stantly, and without any material variation, expressed in baptism from the earliest ages of the church to the present.

The first thing, and the only one which can be explained at this time, is, that we renounce what God forbids, every sin of every kind. And this is put first, because it opens the way for the other two. When once we come to have a due sense that we are sinners, as all men are, and perceive the baseness, the guilt, the mischief of sin, we shall fly from it, with sincere penitence, to the remedy of faith which God hath appointed. And when we in earnest resolve to forsake whatever is wrong, we shall gladly embrace all such truths as will direct us right, and do what they require. But whilst we retain a love to any wickedness; it will make us, with respect to the doctrines of religion, backward to receive them*, or unwilling to think of them, or desirous to interpret them unfairly: and with respect to the duties of religion, it will make our conduct unequal and inconsistent; perplexing us with silly attempts to reconcile vice and virtue, and to atone perhaps by zeal in little duties for indulgence of great faults; till at last we shall either fall into an open course of transgression, or, which is equally fatal, contrive to make ourselves easy in a secret one. The only effectual method therefore is to form a general resolution at once, though we shall execute it but imperfectly and by degrees, of following in every thing the scripture rule, *Cease to do evil, learn to do well*†.

Now the evil from which we are required to cease, is also ranged in our catechism under three heads. For whatever we do amiss, proceeds either from the secret suggestions of an invisible enemy, from the temptations thrown in our way by the visible objects around us, or from the bad dispositions of our own nature: that is, from the devil, the world, or the flesh. And though every one of these, in their turns, may incline us to every kind of sin; and it is not always either easy or material to know, from which the inclination proceeded originally: yet some sins may more usually flow from one source, and some from another; and it will give us a more comprehensive, and, so far at least, a more useful view of them, if we consider them each distinctly.

2

1. First

* Hence our Saviour, speaking of John Baptist, tells the Jews, Ye—repented not,—that ye might believe him, Mat. xxi. 32. † 1st. i. 16, 17.

I. First then, we renounce in baptism *the devil and all his works*. This, in the primitive ages, was the only renunciation made: the works of the devil being understood to signify, as they do in scripture, every sort of wickedness; which being often suggested by him, always acceptable to him, and an imitation of him, was justly considered as so much service done him, and obedience paid him. But the method now taken, of renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh separately, is more convenient, as it gives us a more particular account of our several enemies.

What we are taught concerning the devil, and demons or wicked spirits, in the word of God, is, that a number of angels, having sinned against their Maker, (from what motives, or in what instances, we are not, as we need not be, clearly told, but) so as to be utterly unfit for pardon, were cast out from heaven, and are kept under such confinement as God sees proper, till the day comes, when the final sentence, which they have deserved, shall be executed upon them: but that, in the mean time, being full of all evil, and void of all hope, they maliciously endeavour to make those, whom they can, wicked and miserable, like themselves. And being all united under one head, and actuated by one and the same spirit of ill-will against us, we are concerned to look upon them as one enemy; and therefore the catechism speaks of them as such.

What means they use to tempt us, we are not distinctly informed: and it is great folly, either, on the one hand, to doubt of the reality of the fact, because we know not the manner; or, on the other, to entertain groundless imaginations, or believe idle stories; and ascribe more to evil spirits, than we have any sufficient cause. For there is no religion in favouring such fancies, or giving credit to such tales; and there hath frequently arisen a great deal of hurtful superstition from them. This we are sure of, and it is enough, that neither Satan nor all his angels have power; either to force any one of us into sin, or to hinder us from repenting, or, without God's especial leave, to do any one of us the least hurt in any other way. And we have no cause to think, that leave to do hurt is ever granted them, but on such extraordinary occasions as are mentioned in scripture. They are indeed often permitted to intice us to sin, as we too often intice one another. But these

these inticements of evil spirits may be withstood by us just as effectually, and nearly by just the same methods, as those of evil men. *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you: draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you* *. Unquestionably our danger is the greater, as we have not only flesh and blood, our own bad inclinations, and the allurements of other bad persons to encounter, but the efforts of an invisible enemy likewise. And therefore it was great mercy in God, to grant us the knowledge of this interesting, and otherwise undiscoverable, circumstance of our condition, that we may increase our watchfulness in proportion. And if we do, "greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world †:" and he "will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear ‡."

But, though the devil hath no power of his own over us, we may give him as much as we will; and become slaves and vassals to him as long as we please. In this sense his empire is very large: and on account of it the scripture calls him "the Prince of the Power of darkness §," and even "the god of this world ||." For he was, and is still, in great propriety of speech, the god of many Heathen nations; who, instead of the righteous and good Maker of heaven and earth, worship deities of such vile and mischievous characters, as we justly ascribe to the evil one. And even where faith in the true deity is professed; yet pretended arts of magic, witchcraft, conjuring, fortune-telling, and such like wicked follies, approach more or less to the same crime. For if any of the wretches, guilty of these things, either have, or imagine they have, any communication with the devil; they plainly rebel against God, and endeavour at least to confederate with his enemy. Or if they only pretend a communication with him; as indeed usually, if not always, it is mere pretence; yet this is very inconsistent with renouncing him. And even when they do not so much as pretend it, and would make us believe, that they have such extraordinary skill and power derived from more innocent sources; though they profess no respect to his person, they imitate him in one of his worst qualities, as he is the father of lies. And the lies of this kind are very pernicious ones. They corrupt the notions of religion; give persons

* Jam. iv. 7, 8. † 1 John iv. 4. ‡ 1 Cor. x. 13.

§ Eph. ii. 2. Col. i. 13. || 2 Cor. iv. 4.

sons unworthy opinions of God ; and lead them to imagine, that other beings, as the stars, or even mere names, as chance and fate, share with him in the government of the world. But indeed lies of all sorts are particularly the works of him, who was a *liar*, as well as a *murderer from the beginning* *. And other sins mentioned in scripture, as more especially diabolical, are, pride, envy, malice, false accusations. Whosoever therefore allows himself in any of these things, “ is of his father the devil, and the lusts of his father he doth †.” But whoever is by baptism “ delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son ‡,” renounces them all.

Ask yourselves then : Do you renounce them all in fact ? For mere words are nothing. Do you carefully avoid them, and labour to preserve yourselves free from them ; or do you live in any of them, and love them ? That is, are you children of God, or of Satan ; and whose are you willing to remain ? Make us thine, good Lord, and keep us so for ever !

2. We renounce, in baptism, “ all the pomps and vanities of this wicked world.” The world, which God created, was good : and so far as it continues good, we renounce it not. Therefore the innocent gratifications, which he hath provided for us in it, we ought not to condemn, but to partake of them with moderation and thankfulness : the difference of ranks and stations, which is requisite for the due order of society, we ought to maintain with prudent humility : and every one should take his proper part, as Providence directs him, in the various employments which furnish to us the necessaries or conveniences of life. Labouring to procure such a competency for ourselves and ours, as will support us comfortably in our present condition, is what we are bound to. And if, by lawful methods, and reasonable care, we can rise higher, we may allowably do it, and justly consider it as the promised blessing of God upon our industry. In these respects then, we do not renounce the world : for *in* these it is not wicked. And we should not affect to detach ourselves too much from the state of things, in which heaven hath placed us : but, ordinarily speaking, take our share, (whatever it happens to be,) and that contentedly, of such employments as contribute to the

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I i

common

* John viii. 44.

† Ibid.

‡ Col. i. 13.

common good. If we do meet with difficult trials in our way, as they are of God's chusing for us, we are not to fly from them improperly, but trust in him for ability to go through them well. And they, who resolve to retire out of the reach of all such temptations, seldom fail to run into more dangerous ones of their own creating.

We ought not therefore to shun what our Maker hath appointed us to engage in: but then we ought to engage in it only in such manner as he hath appointed; and to recollect continually, *that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness* *. Not only the heathen world had its idolatrous pomps, or public spectacles, and its immoral vanities, which were peculiarly meant in this renunciation at first: but that, which calls itself Christian, is full of things, from which a true Christian must abstain. All methods of being powerful or popular, inconsistent with our integrity; all arts of being agreeable, at the expence or hazard of our innocence, all ways of encroaching on the properties of others, and all immoderate desires of adding to our own; all diversions, entertainments and acquaintances, that have a tendency to hurt our morals or our piety: making common practice the rule of our conduct, without considering whether it be right or wrong; filling our time in such manner, either with business or amusements, (be they ever so innocent in themselves) as not to leave room for the main business of life, the improvement of our hearts in virtue, the serious exercise of religion, and a principal attention to the great concerns of eternity: these are the things, in which consists that *friendship with the world which is enmity with God* *; and if any man love it thus, *the love of the Father is not in him* †. Which then do you renounce, and which do you chuse? The world, or the Maker of it? Surely you will adopt the Psalmist's words: *I cried unto thee, O Lord, and said, Thou art my hope, and my portion, in the land of the living* ‡.

3. We renounce, at our baptism, *all the sinful lusts of the flesh*: that is, every unreasonable and forbidden gratification of any appetite or aversion that belongs to the human frame. Whatever inclination is truly primitive in our nature may be innocently gratified, provided it be in a lawful manner, and a due

* Jam. iv. 4.

† 1 John ii. 15.

‡ Psal. cxlij. 6.

due subordination to the higher principles within us: but when these bounds are transgressed there begins sin. All such indulgence therefore in eating or drinking, as obscures the reason of persons, inflames their passions, hurts their health, impairs their fortunes, or wastes their time; all sloth, indolence, and luxurious delicacy; all wantonness, impurity, and indecency, with whatever tempts to it; these are renounced under this head: and not these only; but every other sin, that hath its first rise within our hearts. For, in the language of religion, as the *spirit* signifies the inward principle of all good, so doth the *flesh* that of all evil. Therefore vanity and self-conceit, immoderate anger, ill temper and hard-heartedness, repining at the good of others, or even at our own disadvantages; in short, whatever disposition of our souls is dishonourable to God, prejudicial to our neighbour, or unreasonable in itself, falls under the same denomination with the aforementioned vices. For *the works of the flesh*, saith the apostle, *are manifest: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, hatred, variance, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I also told you in time past, that they who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God**. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should come short of it†. And let us diligently and frequently examine our hearts, whether we use every proper method to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God‡.

But before I conclude, I must desire you to observe, concerning each of the things, which we renounce in baptism, that we do not undertake what is beyond our power; that the temptations of the devil shall never beset and molest us; that the vain shew of the world shall never appear inviting to us; that our own corrupt nature shall never prompt or incline us to evil: but we undertake, what, through the grace of God, though not without it, is in our power; that we will not, either designedly or carelessly, give these our spiritual enemies needless advantages against us; and that, with whatever advantage they may at any time attack us, we will never yield to them, but always resist them with our utmost prudence and

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strength.

* Gal. xv. 19,—21]

† Heb. iv. 1.

‡ 2 Cor. vii. 1.

strength. This is the renunciation here meant : and the office of baptism expresseth it more fully ; where we engage *so to renounce the devil, the world and the flesh, that we will not follow nor be led by them.* Now God grant us all, faithfully to make this engagement good, *that after we have done his will, we may receive his promise* * !

LECTURE IV.

Obligation to believe and to do, &c.

OUR Catechism, in the answer to its third question, teaches, that three things are promised in our name, when we are baptized : that we shall renounce what God forbids, believe what he makes known, and do what he commands. The first of these hath been explained to you. The second and third shall be explained, God willing, hereafter. But before the catechism proceeds to them, it puts a fourth question, and a very natural one, considering that children do not, as they cannot, promise these things for themselves, but their godfathers and godmothers in their names. It asks them therefore, *whether they think they are bound to believe and to do, as they have promised for them.* And to this the person instructed answers, *Yes verily* : the fitness of which answer will appear by enquiring.

1. In what sense, and for what reason, they promised these things in our names.

2. On what account we are bound to make their promises good.

1. In what sense, and for what reason, they promised these things in our names. A little attention will shew you this matter clearly.

The

* Heb. x. 36.

The persons who began the profession of Christianity in the world, must have been such, as were of age to make it their own free choice. And when they entered into the covenant of baptism, they undoubtedly both had the privileges of it declared to them, and engaged to perform the obligations of it, in some manner, equivalent to that, which we now use. When these were admitted, by baptism, into the Christian church, their children had a right to be so too, as will be proved in the sequel of these lectures: at present let it be supposed. But if baptism had been administered to children, without any thing said to express its meaning, it would have had too much the appearance of an insignificant ceremony, or a superstitious charm. And if only the privileges, to which it intitled, had been rehearsed; they might seem annexed to it absolutely, without any conditions to be observed on the childrens part. It was therefore needful to express the conditions also. Now it would naturally appear the strongest and liveliest way of expressing them, to represent the infant, as promising by others then, what he was to promise by and for himself, as soon as he could. So the form, used already for persons grown up, was applied, with a few changes, to children also. And though, by such application, some words and phrases must appear a little strange, if they were strictly interpreted: yet the intention of them was and is understood to be a very proper one; declaring in the fullest manner what the child is to do hereafter, by a figure and representation made of it at present.

But then, as baptism is administered only on the presumption, that this representation is to become in due time a reality: so the persons, who thus promise in the child's name, are and always have been looked on as promising, by the same words, in their own name, not indeed absolutely, that the child shall fulfil their engagements, which no body can promise; but that, so far as need requires, they will endeavour that he shall: on which it may be reasonably supposed, that he will. Anciently the parents were the persons, who, at baptism, both represented their children, and promised for their instruction and admonition. But it was considered afterwards, that they were obliged to it without promising it: and therefore other persons were procured to undertake it also: not to excuse the parents from that care, from which nothing can excuse them;
but

but only, in a case of such consequence, to provide an additional security for it. If then the parents give due instruction, and the child follows it, the godfathers have nothing to do, but to be heartily glad. But if on either side there be a failure, it is then *their part and duty* to interpose, as far as they have ability and opportunity with any prospect of success. Nor is this to be done only till young persons take their baptismal vow upon themselves at confirmation, but ever after. For to that end, even they, who are baptized in their riper years, must have godfathers and godmothers present: not to represent them, or to promise for them, neither being wanted; but to remind them, if there be occasion, *what a solemn profession they have made before these their chosen witnesses* *.

This then is the nature, and these are the reasons of that promise, which the sureties of children baptized make in their name: which promise therefore may without question be safely and usually made, provided it be afterwards religiously kept. But they, who probably will be wanted to perform their promise, and yet will neglect it, should not be invited to enter into it: and if they are, should refuse. Let every one concerned think seriously, whether he hath observed these rules, or not: for evidently it is a serious matter, how little soever it be commonly considered as such.

2. The second question is, On what account we are bound by what was promised at our baptism, since we neither consented to that engagement, nor knew of it. Now certainly we are not bound to do whatever any other person shall take upon him to promise in our name. But if the thing promised be part of an agreement advantageous to us, we are plainly bound in point of interest; and indeed of conscience too: for we ought to consult our own happiness. Even by the laws of men, persons, unable to express their consent, are yet presumed to consent to what is for their own good†: and obligations are understood to lie upon them from such presumed consent ever after: especially if there be a representative acting

* Office of Baptism.

† The first foundation of obligations *quasi ex contracta* is, that *Quisque presumitur consentire in id, quod Utilitatem affert*. See Eden, *El. J. Civ.* l. 3. tit. 28. p. 206.

ing for them, who is empowered so to do*. And parents are empowered by Nature to act for their children; and by scripture to do it in this very case; and therefore may employ others to do it under them. But further still: the things, promised in baptism, would have been absolutely incumbent on us, whether they had been promised or not. For it is incumbent on all persons to believe and do what God commands. Only the tie is made stronger by the care then taken, that we shall be taught our duty. And when we have acknowledged ourselves to have learnt it, and have solemnly engaged ourselves to perform it, as we do when we are confirmed, then the obligation is complete.

But perhaps it will be asked, How shall all persons, especially the poor and unlearned, know, that what they are taught to believe is really true; and what they are taught to do, really their duty. I answer: The greatest part of it, when once it is duly proposed to them, they may perceive to be so, by the light of their own reason and conscience: as I doubt not to show you. Such points indeed as depend not on reason, but on the revelation made in scripture, cannot all of them be proved in so short a way, nor perhaps to an equal degree of plainness: but to a sufficient degree they may; as I hope to shew you also. And in such matters, they, who have but small abilities or opportunities for knowledge, must, where they cannot do better for themselves, rely on those who have more: not blindly and absolutely, but so far as is prudent and fit: just as, in common business, and the very weightiest of our worldly concerns, we all trust, on many occasions, to one another's judgment and integrity: nor could the affairs of human life go on, if we did not. And though in this method of proceeding, some will have far less light than others; yet all will have enough to direct their steps: and they who have the least, are as much obliged to follow that carefully, as if they had the most; and will be as surely led by it to a happy end. Hearken therefore to instruction diligently, and consider of it seriously, and judge of it uprightly: and fear not at all after this, but that when you are asked, whether *you think yourselves bound to believe and to do what was promised in your name,*
you

* Of Stipulations in another's name, see Inst. 3. 20. 20.

you will be well able, and on good grounds, to answer in the first place, *Yes verily*.

But your answer must not stop here. When you are thus persuaded, your next concern is, immediately to act according to that persuasion. Now as this depends on two things; our own resolution, and assistance from above: so both are expressed in the following words of the answer, *and by God's help, so I will*. Further, Because our own resolution is best supported by our sense of the advantage of keeping it; therefore the person instructed goes on, in the same answer, to acknowledge, that the state, in which he is placed by baptism, is *a state of salvation*: and because assistance from above is best obtained by thankfulness for God's mercy hitherto, and prayer for it hereafter, he concludes, by *thanking our heavenly Father, for calling him to this state; and praying for his grace, that he may continue in the same to his life's end*.

Now the necessity and nature of God's grace, and of prayer and other means to obtain it, will be explained in their proper places. The two points therefore of which it remains to speak at present, are, the need of good resolution, and of thankfulness for that happy state, in which baptism hath placed us.

In every thing that we attempt, much depends on a deliberate and fixed purpose of mind. But particularly in religion, when once we are thoroughly convinced, that whatever it requires must be done; and have determined accordingly, that, though we know there will be labour and difficulty in going on, and many solicitations and enticements to leave off, yet we will set about the work, and persevere in it; obstacles and discouragements, that till then appeared very threatening, will, a great part of them, vanish into nothing; and those, which remain, will serve only to exercise our courage, and make our triumph glorious; provided we keep our resolution alive and in vigour, by frequently repeating it in a proper manner: that is, in a strong sense of God's presence, and an humble dependence on his blessing. For if we trust in ourselves, we shall fail. And if we pretend to trust in God, without exerting ourselves, we shall fail equally. In either case, the good impressions made on our minds will be continually growing fainter of course: and multitudes of things will conspire

aspire to wear them quite out. Pleasures will soften us into dissoluteness; or amusements, into neglect of every serious attention. Love of riches, or power, or applause will engage us in wrong methods of attaining them: or the cares of life will banish the duties of it from our thoughts. Vehement passions will overset our virtue: or insinuating temptations undermine it as effectually. Some of these things must happen, unless we preserve a steady and watchful, a modest and religious resolution against them, ever fresh on our minds.

And nothing will contribute more to our doing this, than reflecting often, with due thankfulness, that the state, *to which God hath called us*, is a state of salvation: a state of deliverance from the present slavery of sin, and the future punishment of it; a state of the truest happiness, that this life can afford, introducing us to perfect and everlasting happiness in the next. Such is the condition, in which, through the mercy of God, we Christians are placed; and in which, by a Christian behaviour, we may secure ourselves; and not only preserve, but continually enlarge our share of its blessings. But if we now neglect to do for ourselves what we ought; all, that hath been done for us by others, will be of no avail. Neither our baptism, nor our instruction; nor our learning ever so exactly, or understanding ever so distinctly, or remembering ever so particularly, what we were instructed in, can possibly have any effect, but to increase our condemnation, unless we faithfully *continue in the practice of every part of it to our life's end*. This therefore let us all determine to make our constant and most earnest care, with humble gratitude to God, *our heavenly Father*, for his undeserved mercy to us; and with sure confidence, that if we be not wanting to ourselves, *he that hath begun a good work in us, will perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ* *.

* Philip. i. 6.

LECTURE V.

Grounds and rule of Faith.

HAVING already explained to you the several things, which Christians by the Covenant of their Baptism renounce ; I come now to speak of what we are to believe : after which will follow properly what we are to do. For all reasonable practice must be built on some belief or persuasion, which is the ground of it : virtuous practice, on a persuasion, that what we do is fit and right ; religious practice, on a persuasion, that it is the will of God. Now God hath been pleased to make his will known by two ways : partly by the mere inward light of our own understandings ; partly by the outward means of additional declarations from himself. The former of these we call natural religion : the latter, revealed religion.

The natural reason of our own minds, if we would seriously attend to it, and faithfully assist each other in using it, is capable of discovering, as shall be proved to you, not only the Being and Attributes, and authority of God ; but, in general, what sort of behaviour he must expect from such creatures, placed in such a world, as we are, in order to avoid his displeasure, and procure some degree of his favour. And as we cannot doubt of what our own clear apprehension, and the common sense of mankind, plainly tell us : here is one foundation of religious belief and practice, evident to all men. And if our belief and practice be not suitable to it, our consciences, whenever we consult them, nay often whether we consult them or not, will condemn us, to our faces, of sin ; and proclaim to us beforehand the justice of that future condemnation, which God will pass upon it. Every one of you, that hear me, have at times felt this ; make every one of you, a proper use of it.

If then the light of nature were our only guide, it would teach us more than, I fear, many of us observe. But happy are we, that this is not our only guide. For it would leave us uninformed in many particulars of unspeakable moment,
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even were our faculties unimpaired, and employed to the best advantage. But alas, the very first of mankind fell into sin, and derived a corrupt nature down to their posterity: who yet further inflamed their own passions and appetites, perverted their own judgments, turned aside their attention from the truth; and *the light that was in them became*, in a great measure, *darkness* *, even in respect of what they were to do. But what they were to hope and fear after doing wickedly, this was a matter of far greater obscurity still. And had we, here present, been left to ourselves, in all likelihood we had been, at this hour, (like multitudes of other poor wretches in every part of the world that is unenlightened by Christianity,) worshipping stocks and stones: or however, we should certainly, in other respects, have been *walking in the vanity of our minds, having the understanding darkened, alienated from the life of God†; strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world‡*.

But he was graciously pleased not to leave fallen men to themselves, but to furnish them with needful knowledge. What human abilities, what at the best, might have discovered, they would in all likelihood have discovered (if at all) so slowly, that we have great cause to believe, the religion of our first parents was derived from his immediate instruction. But certainly after their transgression, he made an immediate revelation to them; and thenceforward vouchsafed from time to time various manifestations, to such as would receive them, of his truths, his commands, and his purposes: not only republishing the original doctrines of reason, but adding new articles of belief, new promises, and new precepts, as the changing circumstances of things required; till at length, by his Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, he confirmed all his past notifications, and took away all necessity of future ones; acquainting us fully, in the ever-blessed gospel, with all that we shall need to know, or be bound to do, *till heaven and earth pass* §.

Thus then, besides those things in religion, which our own reason can discern, we receive others on the testimony of their being revealed by God: as unquestionably we ought. For if he, who cannot err, and cannot lie, communicates any

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* Mat. vi. 23. † Eph. iv. 17, 18. ‡ Eph. ii. 12. § Mat. v. 18.

information to us ; though it requires us to believe, what we had before not the least apprehension of, or should else have imagined to be exceedingly strange and unlikely ; though it require us to do, what otherwise we should neither have thought of doing, nor have chosen to do ; yet surely his testimony and command may well be sufficient reason for both. We admit every day, upon the testimony one of another, things utterly unknown to us, and in themselves extremely improbable : and we act upon such testimony in matters, on which our fortunes, our healths, our lives depend : as indeed without doing so, the affairs of the world could not be carried on. Now, “ if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater *.” And since we are able to convey the knowledge of our thoughts and wills to each other, no question but God is able to convey his to his creatures.

But, allowing that he can, it may be asked, How do we prove, that he hath conveyed it to men in the Jewish and Christian revelations ? I answer, we believe the Jewish revelation, for this plain reason, amongst others, because the Christian confirms it : and we believe the Christian, chiefly upon the full proof, which Christ and his Apostles have given of it. They who saw him, with their own eyes, perform things which man could not do ; and heard him, with their own ears, foretel things, which man could not foreknow, and yet experienced them to come to pass : as for instance, his healing great numbers of sick persons with a word, and raising himself from the dead : they must be sure, that some power attended him more than human. And since his doctrines all promoted the spiritual worship and honour of the one true God, and virtue and happiness among men : they must be sure also, that this power was not that of an evil spirit, but of a good one : and consequently, that he came from God, and taught his will. If then it be true, that he did, in their presence, not only deliver such doctrine, but foretel and perform such things ; then their faith was reasonable, and ours is so too. Now they do in the strongest manner affirm this : as you may read throughout the gospels and acts : and why are they not to be credited ? They could not every one of them be mistaken in it all ; and think they saw and heard, day after day,
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* 1 John v. 9.

and year after year, things which they did not, any more than we can be mistaken in every thing that we see and hear continually. Besides, they affirm, that they were enabled to do the same wonders themselves, and enabled others to do them. All this could not be mistake too.

And as they could not be deceived in these points, so neither could they intend to deceive mankind. There is all the appearance in the world of their being fair and honest persons, that would not deceive for interest. But besides, what they affirmed was absolutely against their interest. It exposed them, as they could not but imagine it would, to reproach, imprisonment, stripes, death itself. Yet all these things they underwent patiently, one after another, through a course of many years, for the sake of what they taught; none of them, all confessing, or being convicted of any falsehood: which yet they must have been, had they been guilty of any: for the things which they affirmed, were many, indeed most of them, done publicly: and all the power, and all the learning, of the world were employed against them, from the first, to detect them, if possible. Yet no body pretends, or ever did pretend, that they were detected. Besides, if any such discovery had been made, their whole scheme must have been ruined immediately: whereas, instead of that, they spread their religion (though it was contrary to the established superstitions, the deep-rooted prejudices, and favourite vices, of all mankind) through the whole earth, within a few years, by mere force of miracles and arguments, and innocence, against all opposition. These things surely are proofs sufficient of our Saviour's coming from God, without saying any thing of the prophecies of the Old Testament, so many of which were so clearly fulfilled in him.

But then, as all the facts hitherto mentioned are ancient ones; it may be asked farther, How can we now be sure of the truth of what is said to have been done so many ages ago? I answer, By all the same means, which can assure us of any other ancient fact. And there are multitudes of much ancients, which no body hath the least doubt of; and it would be reckoned madness, if they had. The miracles of Christ and his apostles are recorded in the New Testament: a book very fully proved, and indeed acknowledged, to be, the greatest

est part of it, written by the apostles themselves ; and the rest, in their days, by their direction : and no one material fact of it is, or ever was, so far as we can learn, opposed by any contrary evidence whatsoever. Then, that vast numbers of persons were converted to this religion, as they declared, by seeing these miracles, and vast numbers more, by the accounts, which they received of them ; and persevered in their faith, against all worldly discouragements, till at length it became the prevailing one ; appears partly from the New Testament also, partly from other books of acknowledged authority, written in that age and the following ones, by Heathens and Jews, as well as Christians ; and indeed is in the main universally owned and notorious.

But supposing the facts, on which our religion is built, to be truly related, yet it may be asked further, How shall we be sure, that its doctrines were so too, in which it is much easier to mistake ? I answer again, the doctrines of the Old Testament are attested and confirmed by the New. And for those of the New Testament ; we have our Saviour's own discourses, recorded by two of his apostles, Matthew and John, who heard him constantly ; and by two other persons, Mark and Luke, who at least received them from his constant hearers. We have also the discourses of his first disciples after his resurrection, recorded in the Acts : we have besides, many letters written by them, the epistles, sent on several occasions, for the instruction of several new planted churches. Now all these agree in the same doctrine. But further, which adds inestimable value to what they have said and written, our Lord himself promised them, that the Spirit of God should " teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatever he had said unto them * ;" " should come and abide with them for ever, and guide them into all truth †." And accordingly this Spirit did come, and manifest his continual presence with them by his miraculous gifts. We have therefore the fullest evidence, that both what they have delivered, as from our Saviour, and what they have said in their own names, is a true representation of his religion.

But another question is, supposing the scripture a true revelation, so far as it goes ; how shall we know, if it be a full
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* John xiv. 26.

† John xiv. 16. xvi. 13.

and complete one too, in all things necessary? I answer, Since our Saviour had the Spirit without measure, and the writers of scripture had as large a measure of it, as their commission to instruct the world required, it is impossible, that in so many discourses concerning the terms of salvation, as the New Testament contains, they should all have omitted any one thing necessary to the great end which they had in view. And what was not necessary when the scripture was completed, cannot have become so since. For *the faith was once for all delivered in it to the saints* *; and *other foundation can no man lay* †, than what was laid then. The sacred penmen themselves could teach no other gospel than Christ appointed them: and he hath appointed no one since to make additions to it.

In the books of scripture then the doctrines of our religion are truly and fully conveyed to us: and we cannot be sure of any other conveyance. It is a confirmation of our faith indeed, that the earliest Christian writers, after those of scripture, in all material points agree with it. But if they do not, no writers can have equal authority with inspired ones. And no unwritten tradition can long be of any authority at all. For things, delivered by word of mouth, always vary, more or less, in going through but a few hands. And the world hath experienced, that articles of belief, for want of having recourse to the written rule of them, have greatly changed in many churches of Christians: but in few or none more, than that of Rome, which absurdly pretends to be unchangeable and infallible. It is the scripture alone then, that we, who live in these later ages, can be sure of finding the Christian faith preserved, complete and undefiled: and there we may be sure of it.

For as to any pretence or fear of these books being corrupted and altered, either by design or mistake: had the Old Testament been depraved in any thing essential, our Saviour and his Apostles would have given us notice of it. And for the New, the several parts of it were so immediately spread thro' the world, and so constantly read, in public and in private, by all Christians; and so perpetually quoted in all their discourses, and all the disputes of one sect with another, that they could

* Jude 3.

† 1 Cor. iii. 11.

could not possibly be changed, by any of them, in any thing considerable. For the rest would immediately have discovered it, and charged them with it, which must put an end to the danger. And indeed it is an agreed point, amongst all who understand these matters, that nothing of this kind either hath happened or can happen, so as to affect any one article of faith.

But perhaps it will be alledged, that the Bible was written originally in languages, which have long been out of common use, and with which but a small part of Christians now are acquainted: and how shall the rest be sure, that we have them rightly translated into our own? The plain answer is, that all translations, made by all parties, agree in most places, and those of the most importance: and where they disagree, moderate consideration and inquiry will enable any persons, who live in a country of knowledge and freedom, which, God be thanked, is our case, to judge on some good grounds, as far as they need judge, which is right, and which is wrong; which is clear, and which is doubtful. Nor doth any sect of Christians pretend to accuse our common translation of concealing any necessary truth, or asserting any destructive error.

But supposing all this, yet it may be urged, that many parts of scripture in our translation, and in the original too, are dark and obscure: and how can it then be the guide and rule of our faith? I answer, these are few in proportion to such as are clear: and were they more, the Spirit of God, we may be sure, would make all necessary points, in one part or another, sufficiently clear. These therefore the most ignorant may learn from scripture: at least by the help of such explanations, as they are willing to ask and trust in all other cases, and much admirable instruction besides: which if they do but respect and observe as they ought; they may be content to leave for the use of others, what a little modesty will show them is above their own reach.

But that every person may be enabled the better to distinguish between the necessary doctrines and the rest: those, which either Christ or his apostles expressly taught to be of the former sort, or the nature of the thing plainly shows to be such, have from the earliest times been collected together: and the profession of them hath been particularly required of all persons baptized. These collections or summaries are in
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scripture called, *The form of sound words**, *The words of faith*†, *The principles of the doctrine of Christ*‡: but in the present language of Christians, *The Creed*, that is, the belief.

The ancient Church had many such Creeds: some longer, some shorter; differing in expression; but agreeing in method and sense: of which that called the Apostles Creed was one. And it deserves that name, not so much from any certainty that the apostles drew it up, as because it contains the apostolical doctrines; and was used by a church, which, before it corrupted itself, was justly considered as one of the chief apostolical foundations, I mean the Roman.

But neither this nor any other creed, hath authority of its own, equal to scripture; but derives its principal authority from being founded on scripture. Nor is it in the power of any man, or number of men, either to lessen or increase the fundamental articles of the Christian Faith: which yet the church of Rome, not content with this its primitive creed, hath profanely attempted: adding twelve articles more, founded on its own, that is, on no authority, to the ancient twelve, which stand on the authority of God's word. But our church hath wisely refused to go a step beyond the original form; since all necessary truths are briefly comprehended in it, as will appear when the several parts of it come to be expounded, which it is the duty of every one of us firmly to believe, and openly to profess. *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*§.

* 2 Tim. i. 13.

† 1 Tim. iv. 6.

‡ Heb. vi. 1.

§ Rom. x. 10.

LECTURE VI.

C R E E D.

Article I.—*I believe in God the Father, &c.*

THE foundation of all religion is faith in God : the persuasion, that there doth, ever did, and ever will exist, one Being of unbounded Power and Knowledge, perfect Justice, Truth and Goodness, the Creator and Preserver, the Sovereign Lord and Ruler of all Things. With this article therefore our Creed begins. And as all the rest are built upon it, so the truth and certainty of it is plain to every man, when duly proposed to his consideration, how unlikely soever some men would have been to discover it of themselves.

We know beyond possibility of doubt, that we now are ; and yet the oldest of us, but a few years ago, was not. How then came we to be ? Whence had we our beginning ? From our parents, perhaps we may think. But did our parents know, or do we know in the least, how to form such a mind as that of man, with all its faculties ; or such a body as that of man, with all its parts and members ; or even the very smallest of them ? No more than a tree knows how to make the seed that grows into a like tree : no more, than any common instrument knows how to do the work, which is done by its means. Our parents were only instruments in the hands of some higher power : and, to speak properly, *That it is which made us, and not we ourselves* *, or one another. And the same is the case of every animal and every plant upon the face of the earth.

But could our parents be the cause of our being ; yet still the first human pair must have had some different cause of theirs. Will it then be said, that there was no first ? But we cannot conceive this to be possible. And it certainly is not true. For we have undoubted accounts in ancient histories, of the time when men were but few in the world, and inhabited but
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* Psalm c. 2.

a small part of it; and therefore were near their beginning: accounts of the times, when almost all arts and sciences were invented, which mankind would not have been long in being, much less from eternity, without finding out. And upon the whole, there is strong evidence, that the present frame of things is not more than about six thousand years old: and that none of us, here present, is 150 generations distant from our first parent.

If it be said, that universal deluges may perhaps have destroyed almost all the race of men, and so made that seem a new beginning, which was not: we answer, that one such deluge we own; but that no such can possibly happen according to the common course of nature, as learned persons have abundantly shown. And consequently, this proves a higher power, instead of destroying the proof of it.

But without having recourse to history, it is evident from the very form and appearance of this earth, that it cannot have been from eternity. If it had, to mention nothing else, the hills must all have been washed down by showers, innumerable ages ago, to a level with the plains*. And indeed they, who have thought of these matters, well know and confess, that the present constitution of the heavens and earth both must have a beginning, and must of itself come to an end.

To say therefore, that things are by nature what they are, is to say a plain falsehood, if we mean, that they are so by any necessity in their own natures. For then they must always have been such as we see them; and not the least part of any thing could possibly have been at all different from what it is: which is the wildest imagination in the world. The only nature therefore, which we and the whole universe have, was freely given us by a superior Being. And the regularity, in which things go on, is no more a proof, that they were of themselves from everlasting, or shall continue as they are to everlasting, than the regular motion of a clock is a proof,

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* This argument is produced from *Theophrastus*, in *Philo περί αἰθέρας* νέμει, page 510; and two answers to it attempted, p. 513: That mountains may lose parts, and gain them again, as trees do their leaves; or are supported by the internal fire, which threw them up. The first is an absurd assertion: the latter a groundless and false one.

that no artist made it, or keeps it in order, or shall take it to pieces. On the contrary, the more complete this regularity is, and the longer it lasts, the more fully it shows the power of its author ; and not only that, but his understanding and wisdom also.

Indeed what hath no understanding, hath, in strictness of speech, no power ; cannot act, but only be acted upon : as all mere matter is ; which never moves, but as it is moved. But were this doubtful : look around you, and see what marks of understanding and wisdom appear. Turn your eyes upon yourselves : How *fearfully and wonderfully are we made* * ! Of what an incredible number and variety of parts, (a vastly greater than perhaps any of us suspect,) are our bodies composed ! How were these formed and put together at first ? What hath caused, and what hath limited their growth since ? How hath proper and suitable nourishment been distributed to them all ? How hath the perpetual motion of our blood, and of our breath, sleeping and waking, both of them so necessary to life, been carried on ? How is it, that we move every joint belonging to us, instantly, and with such exactness, without knowing even which way we go about it ? Our speech, our hearing, our sight, every one of our senses, what amazing contrivance is there in them ; and the more amazing, the more strictly we examine them ! In the works of men, it is often mere ignorance that occasions our admiration : but in these, the minuter our inspection and the deeper our search is, the greater abundance we always find of accurate adjustments and unimaginable precautions.

But then, besides ourselves, the earth is replenished with numberless other animals. Those, of which we commonly take notice, are an extremely small part of the whole. Different countries produce very different sorts. How many, still more different, the great waters conceal from us, we cannot even guess. Multitudes remain, so little as almost to escape our sight, with the best assistance that we are able to give it ; and probably multitudes more, which escape it intirely. But all that we can observe, we find, down to the very least, contrived with the same inconceivable art, strangely diversified, yet uniform at the same time, and perfectly fitted by most surprising

* Psal. cxxxix. 14.

prising instincts for their several ways of living, so entirely different each from the other.

What wisdom and power must it be then, which hath peopled the world in this manner, and made such provision for the support of all its inhabitants: chiefly by the means of innumerable kinds of herbs and vegetables, just as wonderful in their make, as the animals themselves: that hath intermixed the dry land so fitly with springs, and rivers, and lakes, and the ocean, to supply every thing with necessary moisture, and make the communication of the most distant parts easy: that hath surrounded the earth with air for us to breathe in, to convey our voices to each other, and to support clouds for rain: that hath caused this air to be moved by winds, which preserve it healthful: and *bring those, who go down to the sea in ships, unto the haven where they would be**: that hath placed the sun at so exact a distance from us, that we are neither burnt up by heat, nor frozen by cold; and hath kept bodies of such incredible bulk, as the heavenly ones, rolling on for thousands of years together, with so orderly and exact a motion, that the returns of day and night, and of the various annual seasons, are precisely foreknown; and perfectly suitable for labour and rest, and bringing the fruits of the earth to maturity: whereas were almost any one of these things considerably altered, we must all of necessity perish.

But then, how small a part of the universe our habitation may be; and how many, perhaps greater, wonders the rest may contain; we cannot so much as conjecture. The millions of miles, that are between us and the nearest of the celestial globes, would be astonishing, if mentioned to you. Yet their distance is as nothing, if compared with the furthest, which we see: and very possibly the furthest, which we see, may be as nothing to many others: every one of which, we have no reason to doubt, is as full of regularity, and beauty, and use, as our own abode. And from what origin can the whole of this proceed, but that which the Psalmist rapturously expresses: *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all†*.

To speak of chance, as the cause of them, is absurd beyond measure. Chance is merely a word, to express our own ignorance: it is nothing, and can do nothing. Suppose one of

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* Psal. cvii. 23, 30.

† Psal. civ. 24.

us were asked, how this building, in which we are assembled, or the smallest part of the dress which we wear, came to be what it is; and should answer that no person made it, but it jumped together and held together by chance; would not this be gross folly? And how shockingly foolish must it be then, to give the same account of the existence of a whole world, so admirably contrived, adjusted and conducted throughout! As evidently therefore as any common piece of work proves a workman to have composed it, so evidently, and very much more, the immense fabric of the universe proves a Being of unspeakable power and skill to be the Creator of it.

And accordingly, the belief of a wise and mighty Author of all hath been received in every age and nation: which clearly shows it to be founded in truth, and written in the hearts of men. They corrupted it gradually indeed: first by unworthy representations of the true God, then by adding the worship of false gods, which at length excluded him. But undeniably the primitive notion was that of an invisible mind, the Maker and Ruler of this visible frame: which being plainly under one uniform direction, shows itself to have one only Sovereign director and governor. This doctrine God himself must have taught our first parents in the beginning; he hath confirmed it since by miracles from time to time: and perpetuated the evidence of it in his holy word.

That he is not perceived by any of our senses, is no objection at all against his Being. For our minds also are imperceptible by sense. But as they, notwithstanding, shew their existence by moving and disposing of our bodies according to their pleasure; so doth God show his, by moving and disposing of all things as he wills. And the same argument proves his presence with all things. For wherever he acts, there he certainly is: and therefore he is every where. Our presence is limited, and extends a very little way: but what is there to limit him? Our being is derived from his command; and therefore depends on it still: but he is underived; and therefore independent absolutely. Our powers are only what he hath thought fit to give us: but his power is infinite: for every thing depending on him, nothing can resist him. Our knowledge is every way imperfect: but he who made all things, must in the completest manner know all things, even the most hidden thoughts of the heart. We are often unjust
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and wicked: but God cannot be otherwise than just and holy. For the only reasons of our failing to do right are, that we either perceive not what is so, or else are tempted to act contrary to our perceptions: but God is subject to no mistake, or weakness of any kind. And, which is the happiest attribute of all for his Creation, he must be likewise good. For goodness is plainly a right thing; and therefore he must see it to be so: it is plainly a perfection; and therefore the perfectest Being must possess it in the highest degree. We should be always good ourselves, if nothing misled us: and him nothing can mislead. But the most valuable proof is, that we experience his goodness: for we live in a world full of it. All that we enjoy, and every capacity of enjoyment that we have, proceeds from him. Most of what we suffer proceeds from our own faults and follies. And so much of it as comes wholly from his providence, is designed for our present improvement and future reward; unless by obstinate misbehaviour we become unfit for reward: and then we have only ourselves to blame. For as God is knowing and wise; he cannot but observe the difference between good persons and bad: as he is just and holy; he cannot take pleasure in those, who are otherwise: and as he is the Governor of the world; he cannot fail to show his displeasure, in that effectual manner which the ends of government require. And they certainly do require the bad to be punished, as well as the good to be made happy.

Such then is the nature of God: to whom in the Creed the name of *Father* is given, as he is both the Father of the Creation by forming it, and also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thro' him our gracious, and reconciled Father, as shall hereafter be explained. The next word, *Almighty*, denotes, not barely his irresistible power, but principally that rightful and absolute authority, with which *his kingdom ruleth over all* *. And the last words of the description, *Maker of heaven and earth*, are added; partly to express the ground of that authority, his being the Creator, and therefore the proprietor, of the world; and partly in opposition to the errors of the heathen, who worshipped many beings in the heavens and the earth, as gods; which, in these terms of our Creed, are by evident consequence declared to be no gods, because they

* Psalm ciii. 19.

they are the work of his hands, *of whom and through whom and to whom are all things* *.

The duties, owing to this our awful Sovereign, will be specified in expounding the ten commandments, particularly the first. At present therefore I shall only beg you to remember the apostle's exhortation: *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God* †. Nothing but an evil heart can make unbelief desirable, or even supportable. For to every good heart it must be the greatest joy, to know that the world is governed by infinite wisdom, justice and goodness; and the greatest affliction, to have any doubt of it. If therefore you find the thought of such a governor unwelcome; if you could inwardly wish there were none; be assured, *your heart is not right* ‡. And though you could, with such a disposition, bring yourself almost, or completely, to imagine there is none: what possible security can shutting your eyes give you against danger; or what excuse can wilfully denying God make for disobeying him?

But then observe further, that supposing you do not disbelieve a God at all, yet if you never think of him, this is not, to any good purpose, believing in him at all: and if you think of him but seldom, it is believing in him but little. He, on whom we depend continually, to whom we owe duty continually, in whose presence we continually are, ought never to be far from our thoughts: but we should set him before our eyes so constantly, as to live in his fear always. Doing this needs not keep us from common business; it needs not keep us from innocent pleasures. But it should influence us all effectually, (and happy are we if it doth,) to conduct ourselves in every thing, as persons who act under the inspection of a wise and just superior: whom we may indeed forget, if we will; but shall be remembered by him: from whom we may depart, but cannot escape. In our choice it is, whether we will be the better or the worse for him. But one we must: and that beyond expression. *For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing; whether it be good, or whether it be evil* §.

* Rom. xi. 36.

† Heb. iii. 12.

‡ Acts viii. 21.

§ Eccl. 12. 14.

LECTURE • VII.

C R E E D.

Article II.—*And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord.*

TO believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, is the universal Creed of nature and reason. But Divine Revelation adds further professions to it; of which the first is, that of faith in our ever blessed Redeemer: whose direction was, *Ye believe in God: believe also in me**. Therefore, that we may believe in him as we ought, he is described, in the Creed, by his name and offices, his relation to God, and to us.

I. His name, *Jesus*: by which indeed many of the Jews were called: but it was given him in obedience to an appointment from heaven, made with a peculiar regard to its proper meaning. For it signifies, a Saviour: which is a title conferred, in a lower sense, on several persons in scripture, who delivered others from considerable dangers or evils, or obtained for them considerable benefits and advantages. Thus the judges of the Israelites, that freed them from the oppression of their enemies, are said to be *saviours*, whom *God raised up†* to them. And Joshua, who brought them out of the wilderness into the land of Canaan, subdued it, and put them in possession of it, not only was in these respects a saviour to them; but from a foresight that he would, was called so, as his proper name. For *Joshua* and *Jesus* are, in the original, the same word; only pronounced a little differently. And hence *Joshua* is constantly called *Jesus* in the Greek language, and even in our translation of the New Testament, the two only times that he is mentioned there‡. But if he deserved to be named a *Saviour*, how much more did that person, who hath taught and enabled us to overcome our spiritual, which are infinitely our worst enemies: who hath obtained for us, on most equitable terms, deliverance from the punishment due to

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* John xiv. 1.

† Judges iii. 9, 15. Nehem. ix. 27.

‡ Acts vii. 45. Heb. iv. 8.

our guilt; who hath *destroyed*, on our behalf, death, and *him that had the power of death* *; and will bestow on us eternal salvation, in the kingdom of heaven? With perfect justice therefore was the order given to his Virgin Mother, *Thou shalt call his name, Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins* †: only let us remember, that none will be saved from them hereafter, that continue to live in them here. For is the holy *Jesus the minister of sin*? God forbid ‡.

2. His offices are expressed by the word, *Christ*. This and the Hebrew word, *Messiah*, to which it answers, in their literal meaning signify, *anointed*. Oil was anciently in very high esteem among the eastern nations on various accounts. And, as they were wont to express almost every matter of importance by actions, as well as words; one way of setting any thing apart, and appropriating it to an honourable use, was by anointing it with oil. Therefore we find Jotham, in his parable, makes the *olive tree* speak of its *fatness*, as that *wherewith they honour God and man* §. Accordingly the tabernacle, and temple, and their furniture, were consecrated by anointing them. And almost every sacrifice had oil, mixed with flour, added to it, when it was offered up. Nor was it used only to such things, but such persons, as were distinguished in honour above others: To kings; who are thence frequently stiled in scripture, *The Lord's Anointed*: To priests, concerning whom God commands, in the case of Aaron and his sons, *Thou shalt anoint them, that they may minister to me in the Priests office* ||: And lastly, to prophets; as where *Elijah* is directed to *anoint Elisha prophet in his room* ¶.

And when once, by custom, anointing came to signify raising any one to a station of dignity, the same word was used, even on occasions where no oil was actually employed*. Thus when *Elijah* was bid to *anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, and Elisha for prophet in his own room*: we find not that he ever did it

* Heb. ii. 14. † Matth. i. 21. ‡ Gal. ii. 17. § Judg. ix. 9.

|| Exod. xl. 15. ¶ Kings xix. 16.

* The Jews say that משיחה, *Unction*, signifies, *principality* and *greatness*; עגיו קציגות ונרולה. Reland. Ant. Hebr. ar. 2. c. 8. § 6. and see this further proved, ib. c. 9. § 6.

it literally *. Again, when God is introduced, as saying of the Jewish Patriarchs, before Moses, *Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm* †: we have no ground to think, that they were ever intitled to this name by any solemn outward unction, performed upon them: but only by the distinguished favour and regard of Heaven. And in this sense it was, that God anointed our Saviour *with the oil of gladness above his fellows* ‡: that is, exalted him to a rank of dignity and honour beyond all creatures. For in his person were united those three offices, in the highest degree, to which, you have seen, persons were anciently set apart by anointing.

He is the greatest Prophet, that ever was: having given to mankind the fullest knowledge of God's will, and confirmed his doctrine by the most illustrious miracles and predictions. Hence Isaiah, speaking in his name, long before his appearance, gave that description of him, which he so justly in the Synagogue applied to himself: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, he hath anointed me § to preach the gospel to the poor* ||. And St Peter, after his resurrection, says, that *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power*. What these words mean, the next explain: *who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him* ¶: and the whole means just the same thing, with what he elsewhere says, that he was *a man approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs* *.

In the next place, he is a Priest of an order, strictly speaking, confined to his own person, and of which no other ever was or can be; though in some respects the Priesthood of Melchizedeck peculiarly resembled and prefigured it. He offered up himself for the sins of mankind, as shall hereafter be explained to you. With this sacrifice he appeared before God, *not in the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but in heaven itself* †; made reconciliation for us with him, derives to us continually blessings from him; and thus remains for ever *an High Priest over the house of God* ‡:

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* See 1 Kings xix. 15, 16. Comp. v. 19. and 2 Kings viii. 13.

† Psal. cv. 15. ‡ Psal. xiv. 7. § Chald. doth not understand the anointing here to be with material oil. || Isa. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18.

¶ Acts x. 38. * Acts ii. 22. † Heb. ix. 24. ‡ Heb. x. 21.

compared with with whom, the Jewish Priesthood, and the sacrifices, which they were daily making, were but as empty shadows to the real substance.

But lastly, he is in the highest sense a king; King and Lord of all. Hence in the second psalm, he is called the *Lord's Anointed*, whom he *hath set to be King on his holy hill of Sion* *. Hence, in Isaiah it is prophesied, that he should *sit upon the throne of David*, (that is, reign over the people of God) to *order and establish it well for ever* †. And hence his title in Daniel is, *Messiah the Prince* ‡, or the anointed Prince: the *Son of Man*, to whom dominion shall be given, and a kingdom; that all people, nations and languages, should serve him §. The completion of these prophecies we find in the New Testament: where, as he professes himself a *King*, but *not of a kingdom of this world* ||; so we find him, *after the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour* ¶, infinitely superior to the highest of mortal potentates: *all power being given unto him in heaven and in earth* *; and a name above every name, *that is named in this world and that to come* †: for which reason he is in the revelation stiled, *King of kings, and Lord of lords* ‡. This kingly power he exercises, partly by giving laws, which every one is bound to obey, and no one may alter, diminish, or add to them: partly by protecting his church against all its enemies, visible and invisible, so that neither shall at any time totally prevail against it; partly by conducting every member of it, who is dutiful to him, in the way of peace and happiness, through the grace of his Spirit, and the ministry of his ordinances: and finally he will, in the most conspicuous manner, display his regal power, by everlastingly rewarding his faithful subjects; and punishing all, who have rejected his authority, rebelled against it, or disobeyed it.

These then are the offices, to which God hath anointed, that is, raised and exalted him: and in respect of which he is called the Christ. Let us all be careful to receive him suitably to them: and so hearken to him as our Prophet; that we may partake of his atonement, as our Priest; and live under his protection as our King, for ever and ever.

3. The next thing, mentioned in the Creed, concerning our Saviour

* Psal. ii. 2, 6.

† Isa. ix. 7.

‡ Dan. ix. 25.

§ Dan. vii. 13, 14.

|| John xviii. 33, 36.

¶ Heb. ii. 9.

* Matth. xxviii. 18.

† Phil. ii. 9. Eph. i. 21.

‡ Rev. xix. 16.

Saviour, is the relation, which he bears to God, as the *only Son* of the Father Almighty. Indeed the scripture speaks of God, as the Father of all men; and of all that are good, as his sons. Good Christians are so in a higher sense, than other good men. Angels are the sons of God, in a degree still superior to them. But yet, all other sonships are so inconceivably inferior to that of Christ, that they are in comparison as nothing; and he deserves notwithstanding to be called, as he is several times called in scripture, *the only begotten Son of God**; which greatest of titles appears to be his due, on several accounts.

First, Because, being born of a virgin, he had no earthly father; but was begotten of God by his Holy Spirit. This reason the angel gives, in St Luke. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God*†.

Secondly, As by virtue of the above-mentioned offices, to which he was anointed, he received higher marks of Divine favour, and higher degrees of divine likeness, than any other person ever did. For, as himself argues with the Jews, if, on account of mere earthly power and dignity, men were called gods, and children of the Most High‡; much more might he, whom the Father sanctified, and sent into the world, in so vastly superior a character, be stiled, by way of eminence, *the Son of God*§. And thus is he accordingly stiled, on this account: *I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son*||: also *I will make him my first born, higher than the kings of the earth*¶.

Thirdly, He is the Son of God, as being by the power of God *the first begotten of the dead**, restored to life to die no more. For thus St Paul expresses it: *God hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written, Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee*†.

Fourthly, He is so, as being *Heir of all things*‡‡, and by this inheritance having obtained a more excellent name, than men or angels §§: they being as servants in the house of God, he as a Son ||||.

But

* John i. 14, 18. iii. 16, 18. John iv. 9. † Luke i. 35. ‡ Psal. lxxxii. 6.

§ John x. 34, &c. || 2 Sam. vii. 14. 1 Chron. xvii. 13. Heb. i. 5.

¶ Psal. lxxxix. 27. * Rev. i. 5. † Acts xiii. 33. ‡‡ Heb. i. 2.

§§ Ibid. 4. ||| Heb. iii. 5, 6.

But the most important and eminent sense, in which Christ is the Son of God, remains yet to be mentioned: as, in respect of his Divine Nature, he derived his being from the Father, by an eternal generation; not as creatures do, who are made out of nothing, and were made by him; but in a manner peculiar to himself, and inconceivable to us: by which *all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him* *; and *he and the Father are*, in the strictest union, *one* †. For God was his *Father*, *with whom he had glory before the world was* ‡: and he *in the beginning was with God, and was God* §; *God over all, blessed for ever* ||. Of this mysterious doctrine, I shall speak somewhat further, under the article of the Holy Ghost: and therefore shall only say at present, that being expressly revealed, it ought to be implicitly believed; without attempting in vain to be wise above what is written; to know more, than God hath enabled us. And now,

4thly, From all these things arises, what the Creed mentions in the last place, his relation to us; *our Lord*. For being the only Son of God, he is Heir and Lord of all in his Father's house. Having triumphed over the power of darkness, which held mankind in bondage, we are his by right of conquest: and though "other lords have had dominion over us, we are now to make mention of his name only ¶," as such: having purchased us to him for "a peculiar people *' with his own blood, "we are not our own; for we are bought with a price †." "and he died for all, that they, which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him, which died for them, and rose again ‡." "For to this end Christ both died, and rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living §§:" that he might be such, not in the name only, but in deed and reality also. For "not every one that saith unto him, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of his Father, which is in Heaven |||." To all others his words will be at the great day, what they were whilst on earth: "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say ¶¶?"

Obedience,

* Col. ii. 9. † John x. 30. ‡ John xvii. 5. § John i. 1.
 || Rom. ix. 5. ¶ Isa. xxvi. 13. * Tit. ii. 14. † 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.
 ‡ 2 Cor. v. 15. §§ Rom. xiv. 9. ||| Mat. vii. 21. ¶¶ Luke vi. 46.

Obedience, constant, universal obedience, is the only manner of acknowledging him, that will finally prove acceptable to him; and in that manner we have solemnly promised that we will acknowledge him, and serve him all our days. Thus then let us ever honour him; thus let us ascribe to him, who is our Prophet, our Priest, and our King, our Saviour, our Lord, and our God, "Glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen *."

* 1 Pet. iv. 11. v. 11. Rev. i. 6.

LECTURE VIII.

C R E E D.

Article III.—*Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.*

AFTER setting forth, in general, the name and offices of our blessed Redeemer, his relation to the Father and to us; our Creed goes on to recount the several particulars of what he did and suffered, what he continues to do still, and will do finally, for our salvation.

The first of these is, that "the Word was made flesh *:" that the eternal Son of God wonderfully joining to himself a body and soul like ours, united the human nature with the divine into one person: thus becoming liable to the same necessities and wants, infirmities and pains; and endued with the same innocent passions, appetites and affections, that we are: on which account we read in the gospels of his feeling hunger, and pity, and grief, and anger, nay, and *increasing*, as in *nature*, so in *wisdom* also †: not surely in respect of that nature,

* John i. 14.

† Luke ii. 52.

ture, which “in the beginning was with God, and was God *,” but of the other, by which he was the Man Christ Jesus †. Further than these facts, we are not distinctly acquainted with the extent and properties of this unparalleled union. And it is no wonder, that we are not. For even that of our own souls with our own bodies hath many things in it, utterly beyond our comprehension. We must therefore in all reason, without insisting to know, “how these things can be ‡;” confine ourselves to learn from scripture, what they are. And it hath plainly taught us, that our blessed Lord “was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary.”

Concerning the Holy Ghost, there will be a proper place to speak more at large, in that article of the Creed, which directly relates to him. At present we are only to consider his influence in the conception of our Saviour: which conception was not in the ordinary course of things; but God himself, being already his Father with respect to that Divine nature, which he had from the beginning, became again so, in a new sense, with respect to his human nature too, by the incomprehensible operation of his Spirit. For “the birth of Jesus Christ,” to use the words of scripture, “was on this wise. When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph; before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost §;” in pursuance of what the angel had told her, “Thou shalt conceive and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus. Then said Mary unto the Angel; How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy Thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God ||.”

And thus, in the fulness of time; was accomplished, what had been intimated as early as the fall of man, by that remarkable expression, that the “Seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent’s head ¶;” and what had been expressly spoken out by the Prophet Isaiah, 700 years before our Saviour’s Incarnation, “Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth

* John i. 1. † 1 Tim. ii. 5. ‡ John iii. § Mat. i. 18.

|| Luke i. 31, 34, 35.

¶ Gen. iii. 15.

forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel: which, being interpreted, is, God with us*." When the scripture says, that such a person or thing shall be called by such a name; it frequently means no more, than that they shall have a right to be so called; that what that name signifies, shall be verified in them, shall be true in relation to them. There are many instances of this in the Old Testament. And therefore, as our Saviour's coming in the flesh was the most effectual and illustrious manifestation of God's presence with men, and favour towards them, that could be; though perhaps in common speech he was seldom, if ever, called, yet in the language of prophecy he was very justly called, *Emmanuel*, or, God is with us. For in his person God was really amongst men, in such a manner, and to such purposes of grace and salvation, as he had never been before. And therefore this name agrees perfectly in sense, though it differs in sound, from his common name, *Jesus*, i. e. Saviour.

After saying, that he was *born of a virgin*, the Creed adds, that it was of the Virgin Mary: not that we are to seek for any peculiar mystery in her being called Mary; as some in the church of Rome have imagined, and accordingly formed groundless and ridiculous derivations of the word. But indeed the name was a very common one among the Jews; by which several women, mentioned in the New Testament, and several in other histories, went: and no intimation is given in scripture of its having any especial propriety, or meaning, in relation to her. But the reason of inserting it into the Creed most probably was, because it is set down in scripture, and that, by naming the particular person of whom our Saviour sprung, he might appear to be of that family, from which it was foretold he should arise, being born of the *Virgin of the House of David*†.

Still we are very far from thinking lowly of one, whom first an Angel from Heaven, then "Elizabeth filled with the Holy Ghost," declared to be "blessed among women‡:" and who, with the greatest reason said of herself, "He, that is mighty, hath magnified me, and holy is his name§." For

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greatly

* Isa. vii. 14. Mat. i. 23.

† Luke i. 27.

‡ Luke i. 28, 41, 42.

§ Luke i. 49

greatly without doubt she was magnified, a high honour she received, in becoming, as Elizabeth styles her, "the mother of our Lord *." But this, however singular, was not the most valuable distinction of the holy Virgin. In scripture, no advantage of any other kind is ever put on a level with that of a pious heart, and a virtuous life. On the contrary, when on hearing one of our Saviour's discourses, "a certain woman of the company," in a transport of admiration and affection, had cried out, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked:" his answer was, "Yea, rather blessed are they, that hear the word of God and keep it †." Now of this truest blessedness the Virgin Mary enjoyed a most eminent share: appearing, in all that is said of her, to have been pious and devout, reasonable and considerate, humble and modest, mild and gracious, in the utmost degree.

But though, on account of these excellencies, as well as her peculiar relation to him, she was the object, both of her Son's dutiful subjection in his younger years; and of his tender care even when he hung upon the cross: yet we find no footsteps of any such regard paid her, either by him or his disciples, as can give the least pretence for ascribing to her those prerogatives and powers, which the church of Rome doth. Our Saviour, in more places than one of the gospels, treats her in so cold and seemingly negligent a manner, that one cannot well avoid thinking he did it on purpose, to discourage that monstrous notion, of her right, as a mother, to command him, who was her Lord as well as ours. In the other parts of the New Testament, excepting those which I have already quoted, or to which I have referred, there is only an incidental mention made of her occasionally; as there is of many other persons: and not the most distant intimation of any special honour shown, or directed to be shown her. Yet doth the Romish church appoint offices of devotion to her, bearing her name; address her as *Queen of heaven*, for so they expressly call her: petition her, almost in the same breath with God and our Saviour, that she would bestow on them pardon and grace here, and everlasting life hereafter: Things infinitely beyond the power of any creature whatever. Nay, some of them professedly bind themselves to pray much oftener to her, than they

* Luke i. 43.

† Luke xi. 28, 29.

they do to their Maker and Redeemer: and appear accordingly to place much more confidence in her. And all this, not only without the least proof, that she hath any authority in human affairs, or even any knowledge of them; but in open defiance of the scripture, which directs our prayers to God alone; and particularly of that passage in St Paul, where the *voluntary humility of worshipping even angels*, though they are known to be *ministering spirits*, is forbidden, as what may *beguile us of our reward*; and the persons, who practise it, condemned, as *not holding the Head*, which is Christ*.

But to return to our subject. The foregoing doctrine, of "God manifest in the flesh," is undoubtedly one very wonderful part of that, which the apostle calls "the mystery of godliness †." And yet there is nothing in it, either impossible, or indeed more difficult to the Almighty, than in those productions of his, which we commonly call the course of nature; and wonder at them less, for no other reason, but because we see them constantly; the manner of both being equally inconceivable.

And as the miraculous conception, and birth of Christ, was easy to infinite power: so was it undoubtedly proper and fit, since it was chosen by infinite wisdom. Indeed, some foot-steps of that wisdom even we may be able to trace in this wonderful dispensation. It appears most becoming the dignity of so extraordinary a person, not to enter into the world in the ordinary manner. As the First Adam, possessed of original uprightness, was formed immediately by the hand of God; it was suitable that the Second Adam, who came to restore that uprightness, should not be inferior, but indeed superior, in that respect. Accordingly we read, that "the first man was of the earth, earthy: the second, the Lord from heaven ‡." It seems requisite also, that he, who was designed both for a spotless example to us, and a spotless sacrifice to God, should be perfectly free from every degree of that impurity, and inward irregularity, which the tainted nature of a fallen earthly father may, for aught we know, according to the established laws of this world, communicate: whereas, being produced in the manner that he was may have qualified him perfectly

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* Col. ii. 18, 19. Heb. i. 14. † 1 Tim. iii. 16. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47.

for becoming, both a "Lamb without blemish *," and a High Priest, in every respect and degree, "holy and undefiled, and separate from sinners †."

But whether these or others, concealed from us for wise, though perhaps unsearchable ends, were the reasons why his incarnation was in this manner; yet, for his being incarnate, there are several weighty reasons very evident; and possibly many more, intirely unseen by us.

By becoming man, he was capable of becoming the most complete and engaging pattern of virtue to man. The example of the invisible God might seem too high, and too remote from our view. The examples of men were all, in one respect or another, faulty, and likely to mislead us. But our blessed Saviour, by joining in his own person perfection with humanity, gives us the most encouraging invitation to endeavour at doing so too, according to our power. He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin ‡;" "to leave us an example, that we might follow his steps §." But in particular, by this means he hath set us the brightest example of that excellent virtue, humility, that ever was, or could be; to this intent, that "the same mind might be in us, which was in him: who being in the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ||." Of mutual love also he hath set before us the most amiable pattern, by this amazing proof of his love to mankind. He, who "was rich," in all the glories of God, "became poor for our sakes; that we, through his poverty, might become rich ¶," in heavenly blessings. He, who was exempted from all suffering, suffered every thing terrible in life and death for our good. Surely these are powerful motives both to give up, and do, and undergo, whatever we are called to, for our brethren; and to "love one another as he hath loved us *." His resignation likewise, his meekness, his zeal, his prudence, every one of his virtues, (and his whole character was composed of virtues,) are most useful lessons, derived from his appearing in our nature, that in a very peculiar manner command our attention, and require our imitation.

But further still; by becoming Man he had the means of
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* Exod. xii. 5. † Heb. vii. 26. ‡ Heb. iv. 15. § 1 Pet. ii. 21.

|| Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7. ¶ 2 Cor. viii. 9. • John xv. 12.

most familiarly and beneficially instructing men, in every point of faith and practice. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, and of his fulness have we all received *." This condescension enabled him to accommodate his manner of teaching to the capacities and dispositions of his disciples, to remove their prejudices, insinuate truth into their minds gradually; and thus gently training them up to the kingdom of heaven, lay such deep foundations of his church, as shall never be moved.

By taking upon him our nature, he was likewise capable of being a sacrifice for our sins; a doctrine, which in its proper place shall be explained to you: Therefore, since we "are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil †."

And there was another benefit, consequent to his suffering in our nature, *viz.* His rising again in it; and thus giving us the fullest certainty of our own resurrection unto eternal life.

Even while he sits at the right hand of the Father, interceding for his church, and ruling over it, his being man both makes him a proper person to represent men, and offer up their devotions: and affords us the most sensible assurance of his knowing the wants, and being touched with the necessities, of the nature in which he shares. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him," says the apostle, "to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining unto God. For, in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted †." Seeing then that we have not a High Priest, that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but one, who was in all points tempted, like as we are: we may come boldly to the throne of grace," in confidence of "obtaining mercy, and finding grace to help, in time of need §." And since, lastly, we have a Judge appointed us, who hath experienced whereof we are made; we may be in the utmost degree certain, that his judgement will be according to equity: that, on the one hand, all due allowances will
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* John i. 14, 16.

† Heb. ii. 14.

‡ Heb. ii. 17, 18.

§ Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16.

be made to us; and, on the other, no undue ones must be expected by us, in that day, "when God will judge the world in righteousness by that man, whom he hath ordained*;" and to whom he hath "given authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man†."

* Acts xvii. 31.

† John v. 27.

LECTURE IX.

C R E E D.

Article IV.—Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell.

IMEDIATELY after the mention of our Saviour's birth, the Creed goes on to the mention of his sufferings: for indeed his whole state on earth was a suffering state. By condescending to be "made in the likeness of men*," he exposed himself to all the necessities, infirmities, and pains, to which men are naturally subject. Besides this, he underwent the many inconveniences of a low and unsettled condition. And, which was yet much heavier, though his whole life was spent in *doing good*†, yet was it spent also in bearing troubles and uneasinesses from all around him.

The prejudices and misapprehensions of his kindred and disciples were no small trial. But the perverseness and malice of his enemies was a great one beyond example. They were no less persons than the rulers and guides of the Jewish people, with their blind followers: whom the purity and humility of his doctrine, and the very needful severity of his reproofs for their pride, superstition, and wickedness, had rendered

* Phil. ii. 7.

† Acts x. 31.

dered implacable against him. Every condescension to win them gained only contempt from them : every endeavour to convince and reform them did but exasperate them : they misrepresented and derided, they reviled and threatened, they assaulted and persecuted him : till at length, the hour being come, which he knew was the proper one to yield himself up to them ; they bribed one of his disciples to betray him into their hands ; terrified the rest into forsaking him ; and, after a most unjust condemnation, followed by a variety of despicable usage amongst themselves, to obtain the execution of their sentence they accused him to the Roman power ; first as a blasphemmer against their law ; and, failing in this, then as a rebel against the Emperor, Tiberius Cæsar, the most suspicious of men : by which last suggestion they forced the governor, though declaring himself to be satisfied of his innocence, yet to comply with them for his own safety. After this he was abused and scourged by the soldiers, crowned in cruel mockery with thorns, and loaded, probably till he sunk under it, with the cross, on which he was to suffer.

This instrument of death consisted, as its name denotes, of two large pieces of wood, crossing each other. On one, the arms of the condemned person were stretched out, and his hands nailed ; on the other, his feet, joined together, were fastened in the same manner ; and thus he was to hang naked, exposed to heat and cold, till pain and faintness ended his life. The Jews, while they executed their own laws, never crucified any, till they were first put to death some other way ; after which, their bodies were sometimes hanged on a tree till the evening. But it seems, that only the worst of malefactors were thus treated ; who are therefore stiled in the law of Moses, *accursed* *. The Romans indeed, and other nations, crucified men alive : but usually none besides their slaves ; a sort of persons, most of them, far lower than the lowest of servants amongst us.

This then was what the Son of God underwent, when, having “ taken upon him the form of a servant, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross †.” Now the torment of hanging thus by nails, that pierced through parts of so acute a feeling as the hands and feet, could not but be exquisite ;

* Deut. xxi. 23.

† Phil. ii. 7, 8.

exquisite; especially as it was almost always of long duration. And therefore this punishment was accounted, in every respect, the severest of any. Our Saviour indeed continued under it only about three hours: a much smaller time, though a dreadful one, than was usual. And there are plain reasons for his expiring so soon. He had suffered, the whole night before, and all that day, a course of barbarous treatment, sufficient to wear down the strength of a much rougher and robuster make, than probably his was. Before this, he had felt agonies within, grievous enough to make him "sweat, as it were, great drops of blood *." Partly the near view of what he was just going, most undeservedly, to suffer, might thus affect a mind, which, having so much tenderness and sensibility in the case of others, could not be without some proportionable degree of it in his own. And further, the thought, how sadly, from the time of their creation to that day, men had contradicted the end for which they were created; how large a part of the world would still reject the salvation which he came to offer, and how few receive it effectually; what guilt even good persons often contract, and how tremendous will be the final doom of bad ones: these reflections, which naturally would all present themselves to him in the strongest light on this great occasion, could not but cause vehement emotions in his breast, zealous as he was for the glory of God, and the eternal happiness of men. But chiefly beyond comparison, the awful sense, that he was to bear all these innumerable sins of mankind "in his own body on the tree †," "being made a curse for us, to redeem us from the curse of the law ‡," might well produce feelings inexpressible and inconceivable, which, operating much more powerfully than mere bodily tortures, and making "his soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death §," might so exhaust his strength by heightening his sufferings, as to shorten them very considerably. And accordingly we read, that when he had hung on the cross from the sixth hour to the ninth, he cried with a loud voice, in the words of the twenty-second psalm, where David speaks, as a type and representative both of his sufferings and his following glory, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? not in the least intending, as David before him did not, to signify a distrust of

* Luke xxii. 44. † 1 Pet. ii. 24. ‡ Gal. iii. 13. § Mat. xxvi. 38.

of his love, in whom at the same time he claimed an interest, as his God; but only to express, that those comforts of the Divine Presence, which he used to feel, were now, for mysterious reasons, with-held from him in that concluding *hour* of temptation, which himself so emphatically called, *the power of darkness* *. Then adding words of the firmest trust, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost* †.

Thus did God fulfil what he before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer ‡. It was intimated in the first prediction, made upon the fall; namely, that the seed of the woman should be bruised §. It was prefigured, both in the sacrifices of the Old Testament, and several remarkable portions of its history. He is mentioned by David, as having "his hands and feet pierced ||:" He is largely described by Isaiah; as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; wounded and bruised for our iniquities, and brought as a Lamb to the slaughter ¶:" He is expressly stiled by Daniel, *Messiah the Prince*, that should be cut off *.

These prophecies, the Creed informs us, were fulfilled under Pontius Pilate: for so was the then governor of Judea under the Roman Emperor called. And he is named, because the most usual way of signifying at what time any thing was done, anciently was by mentioning the person, under whose government it was done: there not being any other method of reckoning universally received, as that of counting by the year of our Lord is now among Christians. And it was very useful to preserve the memory of the date: partly, that in after-ages inquiry might be better made into the histories and records of that age, concerning these extraordinary events, said to have then happened; and chiefly, that the Messiah might appear to have come and died at that exact *fulness of time* †, when it was foretold he should. One mark of it was, that the *sceptre* was then to be *departed from Judah* ‡‡: which evidently was departed, when it was reduced to be a Roman Province. Another was, that the second temple was to be yet standing; for the *glory of it* was to be *greater than the glory*

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* Luke xxii. 53. † Luke xxiii. 46. John xix. 30. ‡ Acts iii. 18.

§ Gen. iii. 15. || Psal. xxii. 17. ¶ Isa. liii. 3, 5, 7. * Dan. ix. 25, 26.

† Gal. iv. 4

‡‡ Gen. xlix. 10.

of the former *: and this could be true only by the fulfilling of another prophecy, "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall come to his temple, even the messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in †." Accordingly he did come to it, and it stood but a few years longer. A third mark was, that, from "the restoring of Jerusalem, to the Messiah's being cut off ‡," were to be such a number of weeks; each plainly consisting, not of seven days, but of seven years: which number was completed, while Pontius Pilate was Governor: and therefore it was requisite to observe, that under him our Saviour suffered.

Next to the mention of his death, in the Creed, follows that of his burial: a favour not allowed by the Romans to those who were crucified, unless some considerable person interceded for it. But the Jewish law requiring, that they should be taken down and buried before night §; and the next day being a great festival, when the violation of this law would give more than ordinary offence to the people; "Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, who also waited for the kingdom of God, craved the body of Jesus from Pilate:" who, after making due enquiry, "if he were already, and had been any while dead, gave the body to Joseph;" who buried him respectfully "in his own new tomb, a sepulchre hewn out of a rock ||;" the entrance into which the Jews sealed up, and set a guard over ¶. And thus were his own predictions fulfilled, that he should be crucified *, the most unlikely of all deaths: and at the same time that of Isaiah, that he should not only be buried, but with the most unlikely of all burials in such a case, "making his grave with the rich †."

The last part of this article is, that "he descended into hell:" an assertion founded on psalm xvi. 10. where David prophesies of Christ, what St Peter in the Acts of the Apostles explains of him ‡‡, that "his soul should not be left in hell;" which imports, that once he was there. And hence, after some time it was inserted into our Creed, which in the beginning had it not. However, being taught in scripture, the truth

* Hag. ii. 9.

† Mal. iii. 1.

‡ Dan. ix. 25, 26.

§ Deut. xxi. 22, 23.

|| Mat. xxvii. 57,—60. Mark xv. 43,—46.

Luke xxiii. 50,—53.

¶ Mat. xxvii. 62,—66

* Mat. xx. 19.

John iii. 14. xii. 32, 33.

† Isa. liii. 9.

‡‡ Acts ii. 24,—32.

truth of this doctrine is undubitable: the only question is about the meaning of it.

The first thought of most, or all persons, to be sure, will be, that the word *hell*, in this article, signifies what it doth in common speech, the place where devils and wicked men are punished. And it hath been imagined, that Christ went to triumph over the devil there; and some add, to rescue part of the souls which he held under confinement *, by *preaching*, as the scripture saith he did, *to the spirits that were in prison* †. But the place of torment is never determinately expressed in scripture by the word *hades*, which both the scripture and the Creed use in this article, but by very different ones; though unhappily our translation hath used the same English word for both, instead of calling the former, what it strictly signifies, the invisible state or region. Besides, we do not read of our Saviour's *triumphing* over the devil any where, but *on the cross* ‡. And *the spirits in prison*, to whom St Peter saith Christ by his Spirit preached, he saith also were those, *which were disobedient, while the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah* §. And therefore Christ's *preaching to them by his Spirit* probably means, his exciting by his Spirit, which *strove with* || them for a time, that Patriarch to be a *preacher of righteousness* among them, as the same St Peter, in his other epistle, calls him ¶. But not hearkening to him then, they are now in prison, reserved for the sentence of the last day. This opinion therefore hath no sufficient foundation. Nor would it be found, on further trial, agreeable either to reason or scripture.

Others have thought the word, translated *hell*, to signify in this article, as it seems to do in some passages of the Old Testament, and the English word anciently did, merely a place under ground, by which they understand the grave. And they plead for it, that the first Creeds, which mentioned our Saviour's descending into hell, used no other words to express his being buried, and therefore designed to express it by these. But allowing that, still our Creed, expressing the de-

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* Origen against Celsus, l. 2. § 42. saith, that Christ converted souls to himself there; *τας βουκόμιναι, η ας εντα επιτηδεύεσθαι.*

† 1 Pet. iii. 19. ‡ Col. ii. 14, 15. § 1 Pet. iii. 20. || Gen. vi. 3.

¶ 2 Pet. ii. 5.

scnt into hell after the burial, must mean a different thing by it.

And indeed the most common meaning, not only among heathens, but Jews and the first Christians, of the word *hades*, here translated *hell*, was in general that invifible world, one part or another of which, the fouls of the deceased, whether good or bad, inhabit. And this, how ftrange foever it may feem to the unlearned, yet is by others acknowledged*. Probably therefore, all that was intended to be taught by the expreffion, now before us, is, that when our Saviour died, as his body was laid in the grave, fo his Spirit went where other feparate fpirits are. And we fhould remember, in repeating thefe words of the Creed, that this is the whole of what we are bound to profefs by them. But in what part of fpace, or of what nature, that receptacle is, in which the fouls of men continue from their death till they rife again, we fcarce know at all: excepting that we are fure it is divided into two extremely different regions, the dwelling of the righteous, called in St Luke, *Abraham's bofom*, where *Lazarus* was; and that of the wicked, where *the rich man* was; *between which there is a great gulph fixed*†. And we have no proof, that our Saviour went on any account into the latter: but fince he told the penitent thief, that *he fhould be that day with him in paradise*‡; we are certain he was in the former; where *they, which die in the Lord, ref from their labours, and are bleffed*§; waiting for a ftill more perfect happinefs at the refurrection of the laft day.

How the foul of our Saviour was employed in this abode, or for what reafons he continued there during this time, further than that he might *be like unto his brethren in all things*||, we are not told, and need not guefs. But probably this article was made part of the Creed, in order to affert and prove, that he had really a human foul, which was really feparated from his body. And its refidence, during the feparation, in the

* See Pearson on this article, p. 239, 240. † Luke xvi. 22, 23, 26.

‡ Luke xxiii. 43. Non ex his verbis in cælo exiftimandus eft effe paradifus. Neque enim ipfo die in cælo futurus erat homo Chriftus Jefus: fed in inferno fecundum animam, in fepulchro autem fecundum carnem. Aug. Ep. 57. ad Dardanum. Pearson, p. 237.

§ Rev. xiv. 13.

|| Heb. ii. 17.

the same state and place, where other *spirits of just men made perfect* * are, surely made a vast addition to their felicity. For Abraham, who *rejoiced to see his day* † at a distance, must be inexpressibly more rejoiced to see him present there. All the good persons, whose going thither preceded the death of our Lord, must certainly partake in the joy. And all who came, or shall come, after, must feel much greater consolation for being in a place, where their Redeemer had been seen by such numbers of his saints; and to which, in some peculiar sense, his presence is yet continued: for we learn from St Paul, that the immediate consequence of a pious man's departure hence is *being with Christ* ‡.

But were the reasons of his *descending into hades*, or of the insertion of it into our belief, ever so obscure; it may suffice us, that the reasons of his sufferings and death are very plain, as well as very important. With these therefore I shall conclude this lecture.

I. The first is, that he might be an example to his followers. For so he became the noblest and most engaging pattern imaginable of that great and hard duty, patient submission to the will of God: since being of a rank infinitely superior to the afflictions of this world, and having done nothing to deserve the least of them, he most willingly chose, and cheerfully bore the most grievous that were possible. Well then may we, mortals and sinners, take whatever befalls us, in life or in death, meekly and contentedly; "because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, who yet, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously §. The example also of kindness and love to men he showed yet more fully by his crucifixion, than by his incarnation: foreseeing, as he plainly did, all the pains and torments he should undergo, in executing his great design of reforming and saving mankind; yet deterred by nothing from undertaking it, and persevering in it. "If therefore he so loved us, we ought also," as St John argues, to love one another ||: and "because he laid down his life for us, we ought,

* Heb. xii. 23. † John viii. 56. ‡ Phil. i. 23. See Peters on Job,

§ 1. p. 399. § 1 Pet. ii. 23. || 1 John iv. 11.

ought," if a proper occasion require it, even "to lay down our lives for the brethren *."

2. A second reason of his dying was, that he might thus confirm the truth of his Doctrine: to which it must needs add a very powerful confirmation, that, though the Jews expected a warlike and victorious Messiah, and therefore his taking upon himself a meek and suffering character must grievously prejudice them against him; yet he declared from the very first, what you read in St John, that *as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so should the Son of Man be lifted up †*; signifying, as the same Evangelist elsewhere assures us, *what death he should die ‡*. And he all along persisted in this declaration; rejected every opportunity of worldly power; fearlessly taught the most provoking truths, and voluntarily met what he foretold he should suffer. Stronger evidences of sincerity, than these, a man cannot give; and therefore St John thus reckons up the testimonies to Christ's mission: *There are three that bear witness on earth; the Spirit, the Water and the Blood §*. And St Paul observes, that *before Pontius Pilate he witnessed a good confession ||*; on account of which he is called in the book of Revelation, *the faithful Witness, or martyr ¶*.

3. The third, and principal reason of our Saviour's death was, *to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself **, that *being justified by his blood, we may be saved from wrath, and reconciled to God †*. But as I cannot now enlarge on this doctrine suitably to its importance; and the article of *the forgiveness of sins* will be a proper place to treat of it; I shall only add at present, that *God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him ‡‡*. *For if one died for all, then were all dead: and he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him, which died for them, and rose again §§*. This we should do with great dutifulness; for *we are not our own, we are bought with a price ||||*; and with great thankfulness; for he hath *delivered us from the bondage*

* 1 John iii. 16. † John iii. 14. ‡ John xii. 32, 33. xviii. 32.

§ 1 John v. 8. || 1 Tim. vi. 13. ¶ Rev. i. 5.

* Heb. ix. 26. † Rom. v. 9, 10. ‡‡ 2 Cor. v. 21.

§§ Ibid. 14, 15. |||| 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God *. Unto him therefore, *that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, unto him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen* †.

* Rom. viii. 21.

† Rev. i. 5, 6.

LECTURE X.

C R E E D.

Article V.—*The third day he rose again from the dead.*

HAVING carried on the history of our Saviour to the lowest act of his humiliation, our Creed sets forth, in the next place, how God was pleased to exalt him for undergoing it. And the first part of this brighter view of things, was his resurrection: that is, the restoring of his body to a condition of performing the several functions of life, as before; and the reunion of his soul to it. In discoursing of which, I shall speak, first, Concerning the reality of his rising again: Secondly, The circumstances: Thirdly, The uses of it.

I. The reality; which depends on two things; that he was really dead, and that he was really alive afterwards.

As for the former: the whole of the history shows it fully, nor did any of his opposers ever call it in question. His crucifixion was public, at noon-day, before a great multitude. The Jews who procured it, the Romans who executed it, would both take care, that it was done effectually. And the
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piercing of his side with a spear, which, by the blood and water that followed, plainly appeared to reach his heart, as it must have produced some signs of life, had there been any remaining; must also have destroyed, in a few moments, all that could remain. Then, after this, we find him treated as dead, both by friends and enemies; Pilate, after a particular inquiry into that very matter, granting his body to be buried; one of his disciples embalming him with spices, another laying him in his own sepulchre; the Jews making no objection; but fully satisfied of his death, and only careful to guard against any pretence of a resurrection.

But that, notwithstanding, he was afterwards really alive again, which is the other point, we have multiplicity of evidence of the strongest kinds. The sepulchre was newly hewn out of a rock, shut up with a very large stone rolled to the mouth of it, and guarded night and day by a band of soldiers; who were to watch till the time was over, within which he had said he should rise. Yet, on that very day, the sepulchre was found open, and the body was gone. Now by what means could this come to pass? To his disciples it could be of no possible use, to carry on a deceit, by getting his corpse into their possession. For if they had succeeded so ill with their Master at their head, what could they expect by carrying on the same scheme after they had lost him, but to come to the same end? And what in all reason had they to do, but get quietly out of the way, at least till the matter was a little forgotten? Indeed we find in fact, that, far from being enterprising, they were so disheartened, even when he was first seized, that they all forsook him: and there was little likelihood, that they should have more courage to attempt any thing, just after he was executed. Or if they had, what manner of chance was there, that when a band of sixty men used to military discipline, were set to watch the grave, they should either find them all asleep at once, though it was death to be so, and not wake one of them; or be able to convey the body away from them, though they were awake? Evidently they must have failed, and probably have been seized, in the attempt. Or could they have carried their point; yet, by the resistance made to them, it must have appeared, how unfairly they had carried it: and all hope of getting a resurrection believed must have

have been utterly at an end. Since then the body was not found, and could not, by any human means, or indeed for any rational purpose, have been carried away; it must have been raised by the power of God, as the gospels relate it was.

But to give a full and sensible demonstration of it, *he shewed himself alive to his disciples, after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days* *. Now, in this they could be no more mistaken, than you can in seeing and hearing me, and knowing me to be alive at this time. As they had almost despaired of his rising again, they were but too backward to believe it: and indeed they would believe it on no other testimony, than that of their own eyes and ears; and Thomas even not without touching him, and putting his hands on the marks of his wounds: which the rest, as well as he, when they were *terrified, and supposed they had seen a spirit*, and not their Lord, were invited to do. *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have* †.

They could not, after such trials, be deceived in so plain a matter. And if it be imagined, that they might intend to deceive others; consider: They began their testimony to his resurrection, at the very time, and the very place, where they affirmed this fact to have happened: Their adversaries had all the power of the place in their hands; and all the advantages, that men could wish, for detecting the fraud, if it was one; and they were in the strongest manner interested and concerned to make use of them. Is it possible now, that men so timorous, as the disciples plainly were just before, should, immediately after, venture, without need, to bring the just resentment of both magistrates and people upon themselves, by asserting so strange an event, if it was not true? Yet they did assert it: and far from being disproved in it, thousands at once, notwithstanding the most powerful worldly motives, and the deepest rooted prejudices, to the contrary, were convinced by them. And thus they went on, through many years, to the end of their days, all of them suffering patiently and joyfully, for the sake of this testimony, every thing that could be terrible in life, and at length death itself: nor is it pretended,

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that

* Acts i. 3.

† Luke xxiv. 37, 39.

that any one of them either retracted at any time what he had said, or behaved in any respect so as to weaken the credit of it. On the contrary, they were uncommonly pious and virtuous, as well as bold and unwearied: and, to complete the strength of their evidence, they not only taught, illiterate as they were, a doctrine more worthy of God, than the wisest of men had known before, professing to have received it from their Master's mouth; but they confirmed the whole by vast numbers of miracles, which he enabled them, and they enabled their followers, to perform, both during that age and the next.

This is briefly the proof of our Saviour's resurrection: And if this be sufficient proof; then it is no objection, that more than sufficient was not given: for instance, that he did not appear to the rulers and whole people. They had no way deserved it. He was no way bound to it. Nor doth God, in any case, give men just such evidence, as they please; but such as he knows to be enough for honest minds: and if others will not believe without more, they must take the consequences. Christ appeared to the twelve apostles often: to 500 persons at once besides. If this number be thought too small, when was ever the tenth part of it required in any other matter? And if Christ was to appear to all the Jews, why not to all the Gentiles? Why not to all us at this day? We have no proof, that any one, who desired it, was refused seeing him. Possibly many, certainly St Paul, were converted by seeing him. Some perhaps nothing would have convinced: others would not have owned their conviction. This would have made strange confusion. And had the whole nation been convinced, their notions of the Messiah's temporal kingdom would probably have thrown them at the same time into a rebellion against the Romans; or however, the suspicions of the Romans would have driven them into one; and then the gospel would have been thought a mere political artifice, to serve a favourite purpose. Nay, had they continued quiet, and the Romans let them alone; even then we should have lost that evidence for the truth of our religion, which arises from the persecutions, undergone by the first teachers of it: from the very advantageous circumstances, that the Jews our adversaries have been the keepers of those prophecies, which prove Christ to be come: and also from their wonderful dispersion and preservation: besides the proof which will arise,

arise, in God's good time, from their conversion to Christianity.

II. Thus much for the reality of Christ's resurrection. The circumstances of it, which was the second head proposed, it is best that you should read in the New Testament, where they are told at large. And if the accounts, which the several evangelist's give, should seem not easy to be reconciled in some particulars; you will recollect, that nothing is more common in all historians, than for one to omit what another relates; to tell but part of what another tells more fully; to join close together in writing, what happened at some distance of time in fact; and to neglect a trifling exactness in points that are not material. And the Spirit of God, which directed the gospel historians, might with great wisdom permit them to do thus: it being a strong proof to every considerate mind, that they did not contrive together what story they should tell; but that each related, fairly and artlessly, what he saw and heard at the time, and recollected afterwards, concerning this great fact: of which the more absolutely certain they were in general, the less they would think of being accurate in every little part; and of drawing up a methodical, and minute, and scrupulously strict narration of the whole that had passed.

But there is one circumstance, which requires to be considered more distinctly; that of the time. The almost constant expression of scripture concerning this is the same with that of the Creed, that *he rose again the third day*: reckoning the day of his death for the first; the day, which he continued dead, for the second; the day of his resurrection for the third. And this is the common way of computing every where. Thus the Jews computed the eighth day, on which their children were to be circumcised. Thus also the physicians call that a Tertian, or third day ague, in which there is but one day wholly free from it. And thus men reckon in all cases. Sometimes the expression in scripture is, that *he should rise after three days*: meaning, not after the third day was ended, but after it was begun. Just as when Rehoboam had said unto the people, *Come again unto me after three days*, it follows, *So all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come again to me on the third day**. And in one single place of

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* 2 Chron. x. 5, 12. See Whitby on Mark vii. 31.

the New Testament it is said, *the Son of Man should be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights* *. But this without doubt was intended to be understood conformably to the rest : as it well may. For a day and night in the Jewish language is no more, than what we commonly call a day in ours. Hence we find in the book of Esther, that when she had appointed the Jews to fast for her good success, *neither eating nor drinking three days, night nor day* ; that is, to fast three days and three nights ; and, after that, she *would go in to the king* to petition for them ; the very next words, notwithstanding, are, that *on the third day she put on her royal apparel*, and went into the king's presence †. Again, when we read, that Elijah went 40 days and 40 nights to Horeb the Mount of God, (1 Kings xix. 8.) we have no cause to think the meaning is, that he travelled incessantly night and day ; for so his journey must have been much sooner ended : but that he employed in it such a part of every day, during all that time, as he was conveniently able. This way of speaking may seem strange to us : but the Jews understand it so well, that not a man of them, excepting a very weak one of late date ‡, hath ever pretended to raise an objection from this passage, though very slight pretences will serve their turn §. Thus then our Saviour, dying on Friday, and rising on Sunday, was dead three days, and yet rose the third : which was a sufficient space of time to prove him really dead ; but not sufficient, either for him to see corruption, or for his enemies to leave off watching his grave, or for his disciples to despair absolutely and totally : and therefore no fitter time could have been fixed.

III. The third point to be considered is, The uses of the resurrection of Christ ; which are great and many.

In general, it appears plainly from hence, that he really came from God ; and that therefore whatever he hath affirmed, promised, or threatened, will be found true. For there can possibly
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* Mat. xii. 40. † Esth. iv. 16. v. 1. See Whitby on Mat. xii. 40.

‡ Nizzachen vet. in Wagenfeil, p. 236. who objects, that at most it could be but three days and two nights.

§ Concerning this whole matter, see Reland. Ant. 4. 1. 21.



be no stronger proof of his Divine Mission, than, when he had been openly put to death as a deceiver, for God to reverse the sentence in so extraordinary a manner, as restoring him to life again. This was the great evidence, to which he had before his death appealed. No one either did, or could, object against it, as not being a decisive one. And therefore on its coming to pass, as he had foretold it would, he is justly said by the Apostle to be *declared the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead* *. But there are two things proved by it more particularly.

1. That his sufferings are accepted by our heavenly Father, as a full atonement for the sins of men. For since God hath loosed the bands of the grave, with which he was holden on our account; it is manifest, that he hath completed the satisfaction owing from us; that he hath “through death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and delivered those, who through fear of it, were all their lifetime subject to bondage †.” If then we do, by faith and repentance, qualify ourselves to receive the pardon, that he is authorized to give; we may boldly say, with the Apostle, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who maketh intercession for us ‡.”

2. From our Saviour’s resurrection appears the certainty of our own. The promise, which he made, was, that “every one who believed on him should have everlasting life, and he would raise him at the last day §:” and to show the truth of it, he raised up himself from the death, which he had suffered for the sins of men. This is a proof, clear and strong beyond all exception or cavil. Since Christ is risen, our resurrection is possible: and since Christ hath promised, it is certain. “If then we believe Jesus died, and rose again,” we must believe too, as St Paul justly argues, that “them also, which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; and they which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, and so shall we
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* Rom. i. 4. † Heb. ii. 14, 15. ‡ Rom. viii. 33, 34. § John vi. 40.

be ever with the Lord *." "Blessed therefore be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled; that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us †." And may "the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant make us perfect in every good work, to do his will; working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory, for ever and ever. Amen ‡."

* 2 Thess. iv. 14, 16, 17.

† 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

‡ Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

LECTURE XI.

C R E E D.

Article VI.—He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

THE first care of our blessed Lord, in consequence of his Resurrection, was to satisfy his disciples fully of the truth of it: the next, to fit them for instructing mankind in his religion, of which it was one principal doctrine and evidence. "He therefore showed himself alive to them, after his passion, by many infallible proofs; being seen of them forty days; and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God *." This being done, as he had now gone thro' the whole of his work on earth; it was proper, that he should return to that happy place, from whence his compassion to a
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* Acts i. 3.

lost world had brought him down : according to the words of his own prayer ; “ Father, the hour is come ; I have glorified thee on earth : I have finished the work, which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory, which I had with thee, before the world was*.” There did not remain any further reason for his appearance personally amongst men ; till he should “ come again to judge the quick and the dead.” Many ages were to pass “ before that great and terrible day of the Lord†.” It was fit therefore, that, as St Peter speaks, “ the Heaven should receive him, until the times of the restitution of all things ‡.”

And, though the redemption of mankind was completed by him, so far as, in this lower world, it could be ; yet there was left an important part of it, to be accomplished above. The Jewish dispensation, as the epistle to the Hebrews more especially informs us, was “ a shadow of things to come §.” As therefore, under this, the great Sacrifice of Atonement was yearly slain without the sanctuary first, and then the High Priest entered alone with the blood of it, into the most holy place ; there to offer it before the Lord, and atone for the sins of the people : so, in the gospel age, was our blessed Saviour, first as *the Lamb of God ||*, to be sacrificed for our sins on earth ; and then, as the *High Priest of our profession ¶*, to *go, with his own blood, into heaven ; the true hol place* of which the other was a figure, there to appear with it, *in the presence of God for us ** : and thus, having offered one Sacrifice for sins, he was for ever to sit down on the right hand of God †.

When the time therefore was come, for this purpose of Divine Wisdom to take effect ; having gradually prepared the minds of his apostles to bear his departure, he, in the last place, with his usual tenderness, gave them all a solemn blessing : the words of which indeed are not delivered down to us ; but probably they might not be unlike, and certainly they could not well be more affectionate, than those, which we find he used for their consolation, even before his sufferings, on a more distant prospect of his being taken from them. “ Let not your heart be troubled : believe in God ; believe also in me. I go to prepare a place for you ; and I will come again,

and

* John xvii. 4, 5 † Joel ii. 31. ‡ Acts iii. 21. § Heb. x. 1.

|| John i. 29. ¶ Heb. iii. 1. * Heb. ix. 12, 24. † Heb. x. 12.

and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter: that he may abide with you for ever. Peace I leave with you: my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*." "It is expedient for you, that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: But if I depart, I will send him unto you, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world†."

Undoubtedly with such like words of grace and affection, which every good Christian may and ought to consider as spoken to himself, did our Lord, before his departure, comfort his disciples under the immediate view of that interesting event. "And it came to pass," the Evangelists informs us, "that as he was yet blessing them, while they beheld, he was taken up: and a cloud received him out of their sight‡."

It is hardly possible to conceive stronger or more various emotions of mind, than those, with which the breast of every one of his followers must be filled, on this occasion: of surprise and astonishment at what they had seen; of gratitude and tenderness, in return to what they had heard; of grief and fear concerning their now solitary condition; yet mixed, at the same time, with submission and hope, and faithful trust in their dear Lord. But, as he himself had told them, "If they loved him, they would rejoice, because he went unto the Father§;" so in fact, amidst all the passions working within them, this prevailed above the rest; and triumphant gladness of heart was the feeling, that took possession, and dwelt with them. "They worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God||."

Let us then rejoice also in this glorious exaltation of Christ our Head. Let us consider the opportunity it gives us of exercising that *faith* in him, which the apostle justly calls "the

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evidence

* John xiv. 1, 2, 3, 13, 16, 27.

† John xvi. 7, 22, 33.

‡ Luke xxiv. 51. Acts i. 9.

§ John xiv. 28.

|| Luke xxiv. 52.

evidence of things not seen *;" and of obtaining a reward, suitable to the greater virtue and piety that we show, in conducting aright our understandings, our hearts and our lives, under a lower, and yet sufficient, degree of evidence for our holy religion. "Because thou hast seen me," saith he himself to St Thomas, "thou hast believed: blessed are they, that have not seen, and yet have believed †." This blessedness therefore, by his ascension, he hath left to his whole church the means of acquiring; "that the trial of your faith," as St Peter expresses it, "may be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom not having seen, ye love; and in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls ‡." Let us consider too, that if his absence tries our faith, the manner of his going away powerfully confirms it. For the apostles were eye-witnesses of his ascending into the clouds: and what stronger proof need we, of his coming from God, than his being thus taken up to him again; according to his own repeated predictions; besides the remarkable, though obscurer, intimations of the same thing in the Old Testament?

Nor let it seem strange, that the scripture should speak of one especial place, as the peculiar and appropriated residence of God. We acknowledge, that he is, and cannot but be, every where. "Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of his glory §:" yea, "the Heaven and Heaven of heavens cannot contain him ||." "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: If I go down to hell, thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me ¶." Yet, notwithstanding this, the scripture constantly mentions him, as having condescended to establish his throne in one particular place; and exhibit himself there, in the symbol of light inaccessible: where therefore his holy angels attend upon him, and see his face; from whence he issues forth his commands, as princes do theirs from the royal palace; and is represented, as view-

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* Heb. xi. 1. † John xx. 29. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 7, 8, 9. § Te Deum.

|| 1 Kings viii. 27.

¶ Psal. cxxxix. 7,—10.

ing and observing the actions of his creatures ; and pouring down blessing or vengeance, as their behaviour requires. "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's seat is in heaven : his eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men *." Here it is, that "thousand thousands minister unto him ; and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him†," celebrating his praises, and rejoicing in the light of his countenance. For "in his presence is the fulness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore‡."

Into this blessed place then did our Saviour ascend : and there, as the Creed, in conformity with scripture, teaches, "sat down at the right hand of the Father." Not that God who is an infinite Spirit, and by the word of his power doth whatever he pleases, both in heaven and earth ; either hath, or needs, bodily members, for instruments of perception or action, like our imperfect nature. But these things are figuratively ascribed to him, in condescension to human capacities. And the meaning of such figures is easily understood. He is the King of the whole world. Now into a king's immediate presence not all persons are usually admitted. And of those who are, not all possess the same rank and degree of nearness to him : but every one such as he pleases to appoint. Now the highest mark of dignity, which the eastern monarchs conferred on the person, whom they esteemed and favoured most, was placing him, on occasions of solemnity, at their right hand ; the second in honour was next to the royal person, on the other side ; and the rest of the court succeeded in the same order. Thus, when the mother of King Solomon came to petition for Adonijah, the scripture informs us, "he sat down on the throne, and caused a seat to be set for her, and she sat on his right hand§." And when the sons of Zebedee had, by mistake, imagined the kingdom of our Saviour to be like one of this world, their petition was, "that they might sit, one on his right hand, the other on his left, in his kingdom||." Sometimes the posture of standing is mentioned : as Psal. xlv. 9. "on thy right hand did stand the Queen in gold of Ophir." And, when the Court of Heaven, attending on their Sovereign, is described ; "I saw," saith the prophet, "the Lord sitting on

* Psal. xi. 4. † Dan. vii. 10. ‡ Psal. xvi. 12. § 1 Kin. ii. 19.

|| Matth. xx. 21.

on his throne ; and all the host of heaven above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come * ;” “ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth † :” “ And he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet ‡ .” Sitting at God’s right hand, implies this pre-eminence ; “ for to which of the angels said God at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool § ?”

Indeed “ all power, both in heaven and earth, was given to” || our Saviour before his ascension : but not, till afterwards, was his title to it publicly recognized, and possession of it solemnly taken by him : which, in other words, “ is fitting down at the right hand of God.”

But let us consider, not only the nature of our Saviour’s exaltation ; but, what principally concerns us, the benefits of it to mankind, which are three : His sending the Holy Spirit to abide for ever with his church : His interceding for it with the Father : His powerful protection of it against its enemies.

1. His sending the Holy Spirit. This was reserved, with great wisdom, till after his ascension ; both because it was then most needed, to comfort his disciples under the loss of his personal presence ; and also, because it afforded a new evidence of his Divine power, that, far from being in a worse condition by his departure, they were endued with higher degrees of miraculous gifts, than ever they had been before. St John therefore, upon our Saviour’s promising the Spirit to them who should believe on him, observes, that “ the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified ¶ .” And St Peter, on the day when it was bestowed, saith, “ Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear * .” The miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost indeed, being no longer necessary, ceased many ages ago : but his sanctifying graces, a much more important blessing, which we shall always need, continue still ;

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and

* Eph. i. 20, 21. † Phil. ii. 10. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 25. § Heb. i. 13-

|| Mat. xxviii. 18. ¶ John vii. 39. * Acts ii. 33.

and constitute his present share in the work of our redemption: agreeably to the assurance, which our blessed Lord gave, of *another Comforter to abide with us, and dwell in us for ever* *.

2. His Intercession with the Father. For his oblation of himself being accepted, as the foundation of a new covenant of mercy and favour; we have now an Advocate in heaven, sure, to prevail: *an High Priest, that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been tempted in all points as we are* †, ever appearing for us in the presence of God; and efficaciously pleading the pardon, which he hath purchased, for all who repent of and forsake their sins. *Who then is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us* ‡.

3. His Protection of his Church against all its enemies, spiritual and temporal. The attempts of the former he defeats by the above-mentioned methods, the influences of his Spirit to preserve us from sin, and the efficacy of his intercession to procure us pardon on most equitable terms, whenever we fall into it. As for the latter: Upon the first opposers of his church, the Jewish and Roman persecutors, his vindictive power hath been most remarkably exercised: and the succeeding adversaries of religion, in every age, have served, and shall serve, only for a trial of *the faith and patience of the saints* §: generally, without prevailing to their harm even here; and always being subservient to their happiness hereafter: till at length the appointed time shall come, when *the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and his Christ* ||: and having reigned on this earth, till its period arrives, he shall resign up to God his kingdom of grace, its end being accomplished; and reign over his saints, in that of glory, for ever and ever: fully performing that invaluable promise, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne* ¶.

These things being so, instead of amusing ourselves with the speculative consideration of his ascension, and the reasons of it; we should learn from his departure to prepare for his return.

* John xiv. 16, 17.

† Heb. iv. 15.

‡ Rom. viii. 34.

Rev. xiii. 13.

|| Rev. xi. 15.

¶ Rev. iii. 21.

return. To this was the attention of those, who saw it, directed by the angels. *Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven* *. The present article of our Creed is, that he *sitteth at the right hand of God*. The next is, *that from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead*. And what should this very close connection teach us, but that we all be careful to behave in such manner, that we may be ready to *meet our Lord* † at his coming, and *enter with him into his joy* ‡? He hath descended upon earth to procure us a right to future happiness; and instruct us, how to obtain it: he is now ascended up into heaven, to *prepare a place for us* §: there seated in glory, he invites us to him. What then remains, but that we fix *our hearts where our treasure is* ||; and “set our affections on those that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God ¶?” But in vain do we rejoice in a glorified Saviour, unless we become “his friends, by doing what he commands us * :” in vain do we lift up our eyes and our wishes to his happy abode; unless, by resembling him now in purity and holiness, we qualify ourselves to partake hereafter the resemblance of his glory. “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life, and doth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart. He that hath used no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour, and hath not slandered his neighbour. He that setteth not by himself: but is lowly in his own eyes. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned: but he honoureth them, that fear the Lord. He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, and hath not lift up his soul unto vanity. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation †.”

* Acts i. 11. † 1 Thess. iv. 17. ‡ Mat. xxv. 21. § John xiv. 2.
 || Mat. vi. 21. ¶ Col. iii. 1. * John xv. 14. † Psal. xv. and xxiv.

LECTURE XII.

C R E E D.

Article VII.—*From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

THIS is the great and awful doctrine, which makes all the preceding ones so important to us: that “God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man, whom he hath ordained * :” a truth, the belief of which infinitely concerns every one of us to settle well in our souls, and be duly affected by it.

The reason of our minds, and even the feelings of our hearts, give us very strong grounds to be persuaded of a future judgment, had we no further evidence. We are all of us by nature, capable of perceiving, what is just and right for us to do, and what is otherwise: we are all capable of acting according to this perception: we all see, it is fit we should; and fit we should suffer for it, if we do not. When we behave according to our duty, there springs up a delightful peace and serenity within our breasts: when we knowingly transgress it, we not only disapprove and accuse ourselves, whether we will or not, but experience a foreboding expectation of just recompence. “For wickedness, condemned by her own witness, is very timorous: and, being pressed with conscience, always forecasteth grievous things †.” Nor do these horrors relate only, or chiefly, to what we have deserved to suffer in this world: but when our share in it draws to an end, and death approaches, then our fears grow stronger than ever, concerning somewhat, which is yet to come ‡. And thus are all men “a law unto themselves; and shew the work of the law

* Acts xvii. 31.

† Wisd. xvii. 11.

‡ Επειδὴ τις εἴηκε ἢ τε οὐδαὶ τελευτήσῃ, εἰσπράττει αὐτὸ φοβῆσθαι καὶ θορόντις περὶ ὧν ἐν ταῖς πράξεσιν ἔκτισται. Plat. de Rep. l. 1.

law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness *."

That some persons are able to overwhelm these apprehensions under business and pursuits, to drown them in debauchery and intemperance, to divert them by pleasures and amusements, to set up little cavils against them, and even affect to ridicule them; is no objection in the least to their being just, and well grounded. The feeling is plainly natural: every one of these methods to get rid of it, is plainly a force upon nature. Often it returns with double terror, for having been unjustly driven away: and seldom, or never, can the most thoughtless, or most hardened person, lose intirely those fears, which are seated in the very bottom of our souls; and which if we could lose, we should only be the more surely miserable: for still the foundation of them would remain unshaken.

Still it would be true, that there is a God, who made us, and is at all times intimately present with us: who therefore with unspeakably more ease perceives all that passes in our very hearts, than we do one another's outward actions: who being perfect in knowledge, distinguishes, in every case, what is good from what is evil; and being perfect in holiness, approves the one, and abhors the other. Even we are thus affected in some degree: and his infinite purity must therefore be infinitely more so. Now, what he hates, he can punish as he pleases; and reward what he loves: for all power is in his hands; all nature depends on the word of his mouth; and he is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever †."

Think then: Will the righteous and holy King of the whole earth, when he hath planted his laws in our whole hearts, when he hath made us for the very purpose of obeying them, when he hath filled us with so deep a sense of what will follow, if we disobey them; suffer us, after this, to despise and dishonour him, to injure his creatures, abuse ourselves, and disappoint the great design of forming us; and yet take no notice? Doth he govern the world, to the very least parts of it, with so much wisdom and care, in every other respect; and will he be so unwise and negligent, as to overlook the one thing, that deserves his attention above all; and make no distinction

* Rom. ii. 15.

† Heb. xiii. 8.

distinction "between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not *?" It cannot be: and the conscience of every one of you, at this moment, tells you it cannot.

If then such a distinction will be made, when and where will it be made? Here, in this world, it plainly is not done, to a degree that the Almighty Governor of it can possibly think sufficient. Perpetually we see "just men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked: and wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous †." Amidst all this disorder, there are indeed evident marks of a providence: but of a providence, that gives only specimens and earnest of its justice at present; reserving the full vindication and display of itself for that future state, in which our souls, being naturally immortal, are evidently destined to exist; and where all men shall receive according to their works. This is the great end, that God had in his view, when he created us: and it is the principal point, that we should have in our own view, through the whole of our lives.

More or less all mankind, even in their darkest ignorance, have always had some persuasion of a future recompence: which, however mixed with errors, yet, being thus universal and lasting, must have been grounded in nature and truth. And the wiser and better any persons were, amongst the heathens, the stronger and more rational belief they had of this doctrine: which yet was not owing merely to their wishes, and their hopes: for the worst of sinners, that were the farthest from desiring a just reward hereafter, feared it, whether they would or not. Thus we find it recorded of a very wicked Heathen, that when "Paul reasoned of righteousness and temperance, and judgement to come, Felix trembled ‡."

But still, while the evidence of this great article consisted wholly in mere human reasonings, about a matter, that was out of sight: bad persons, though they could not help at some times believing enough to fright them; yet made a shift at others to disbelieve enough, to make them tolerably easy in doing wrong: and good persons, though they might have hope sufficient to influence them in common cases; yet often had

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* Mal. iii. 18.

† Eccl. viii. 14.

‡ Acts xxiv. 25.

not sufficient to support them under harder duties, and heavier afflictions, than ordinary. Even the obscurer confirmations of this doctrine in the Old Testament therefore, were a great benefit to those who partook of them: and as they had no right to any such assurances of it; they had no cause to complain, that they were not clearer. But we have infinite cause to be thankful who are favoured in the gospel with the fullest and strongest attestation to this most interesting of all our concerns. Christians, unless they renounce their Christianity, cannot disbelieve a future judgment. The only difficulty is, to be influenced by our belief, as we ought. And in that also the scripture hath given us the best help, which is possible to be given; by its affecting accounts of the several particulars, that relate to this awful transaction: the persons on whom, the person by whom, the time when, the things for which, and the manner in which, the final sentence of happiness or misery is to be pronounced. These points therefore I shall now endeavour to place before you distinctly. And,

1. The persons, on whom, are, *the quick*, that is the living, *and the dead*. All that have died before, in every age of the world, shall be restored to life: and all that remain alive, shall be joined with them to receive their doom; nor shall any exception be made. For we are expressly assured, that *the dead, small and great, shall stand before God* *. The very highest therefore shall not escape by their power, the richest by their wealth, the wisest by their abilities or artfulness: nor, on the other hand, shall the meanest wretch be looked on, as too inconsiderable for God's notice; or the most ignorant be exempted from answering for the care, which he hath taken, to get the knowledge, that he might; and to use the knowledge, that he had of his duty. Whatever our station be, we are bound alike to behave in it, as well as we can: and how far we have done so, and how far we have failed of it, is the one inquiry, that our Judge will make. Other distinctions, how considerable so ever they appear in our eyes, to him are as nothing. All creatures are equally beneath his infinite Majesty; but none are either beneath or above his inspection now, or his sentence hereafter. Here then we are put, everyone of us, on a fair trial, without any disadvantage or inequality whatever. Both the most honourable, and the most

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* Rev. xx. 12.

contemptible persons, as to worldly circumstances, may be either the happiest or the most miserable in the next life, just as they shall chuse. Let those of high degree therefore be humble, those of low be content, and all be watchful over themselves.

2. The person, by whom the sentence shall be passed, is Jesus Christ. *For the Father himself judgeth no man: but hath committed all judgment to the Son, and given him authority to execute it, because he is the Son of Man* *: because he is the person, described by that name in the Prophet Daniel, before whom *the judgement was to be set, and the books opened* †: who also is no less peculiarly qualified, than expressly appointed for it; since in him Divine Perfection is joined with experience of human infirmity. So that being judged by one, who *was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin* ‡; we may be sure, that every due allowance will be made to our natural weakness, and no undue one to our wilful wickedness. Unless therefore we repent and amend, he, that came the first time to save us, will come the second to condemn us; and the meek and merciful Jesus appear clothed with such terror, that we shall *say to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand* §?

3. The time, when these things shall be, himself informs us, *it is not for us to know*; being known to the Father alone, and put in his own power. But still, what there is need we should be told concerning it, the scripture hath revealed: that it shall come unexpectedly, and that it shall come soon. The general judgment may come, when we least think of it. But however distant it may possibly be in itself, yet to every one of us it is undoubtedly in effect very near, and even at the door. *For it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment* ||. A few years, it may be a few days, will bring us to our end here: and in whatever state death finds us, in the same will the last judgment find us also. *For there is no device, nor wisdom in the grave* ¶: but *where the tree falleth there shall*

* John v. 22, 27. † Dan. vii. 10, 13. ‡ Heb. iv. 15.

§ Rev. vi. 16, 17. || Heb. ix. 27. ¶ Eccl. ix. 10.

shall it be *. Take heed therefore to yourselves, lest your hearts be overcharged, either with the pleasures and amusements, or the cares and labours of this life; and so that day come upon you unawares; for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the whole earth †. The evil servant that shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: the Lord of that servant shall come in a day, that he looketh not for him; and in an hour, that he is not aware of; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth ‡. Watch ye therefore, and be ready: blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing §.

4. The things, for which we shall be judged, are, all voluntary deeds, words and thoughts. “For we must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body ||.” Now, what we say, and what we think designedly, is as truly part of our doings, as what we act. Our discourse may be of as much service or harm to others; and even our inward imaginations may as much prove us to be good or bad in ourselves; and contribute to make us yet better or worse. Often indeed we cannot help wicked fancies coming into our minds; and that alone will never be imputed to us as a sin. But we can help inviting, indulging, and delighting in them: and if we do not, it is just, that we should account for our fault. And on the other hand, it is fit and reasonable, that every good person should be rewarded, not only for the religious and worthy actions that he hath performed; but for every good word, that hath proceeded from his good heart; for his pious and virtuous purposes and affections. For God sees the one, just as clearly, as the other: “there is no creature, that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do.” And certainly what he sees, and sees to be proper for his notice; he will not fail to take suitable notice of it. The scripture therefore assures us, with the utmost reason; not only, that “by our words we shall be justified, and by our words condemned;” giving account for the very idlest and slightest of them, either with grief or joy, ac-

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cording

* Eccl. xi. 3. † Luke xxi. 34, 35. ‡ Mat. xxiv. 48,—51.

§ Ibid. 42, 44, 46. || 2 Cor. v. 10. ¶ Heb. iv. 13.

according as its tendency was right or wrong *: but also, that “God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ †:” “that there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known ‡.” “For God shall bring every work in judgment, with every secret thing; whether it be good, or whether it be evil §.”

Therefore, with respect to other persons, let us be charitable, and “judge nothing” needlessly “before the time, until the Lord come; who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of all hearts ||.” And, with respect to ourselves, let us be easy under human censures, if we have given no occasion for them; for in that case, “it is a small thing to be judged of man’s judgment ¶:” But let us carefully prepare for the Divine sentence, by “perfecting holiness in the fear of God *;” and after all our care, let us be thoroughly humble: for though “we know nothing of ourselves, yet are we not hereby justified,” if it be through partiality or forgetfulness, as possibly it may; “but he that judgeth us, is the Lord †.”

5. As to the manner of the judgment, it will be with the greatest solemnity and awfulness, and with the greatest justice and equity. “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven ††,” “with his mighty angels, in flaming fire §§;” and “the trumpet shall sound |||,” and “all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and come forth ¶¶.” “Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory **,” “and the books shall be opened, and they shall be judged out of those things, which are written in the books, according to their works ††.” As “many as have sinned without a revealed law, shall perish without a revealed law: and as many as have sinned in the law,” whether Jewish or Christian, “shall be judged by the law ††.” “Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom much is committed, of him will the more be asked ☞.” He “that hath sowed sparingly, shall

* Mat. xii. 36, 37. † Rom. ii. 16. ‡ Mat. x. 26. § Eccl. xii. 14. || Cor. iv. 5.

¶ Ibid. 3. * 2 Cor. vii. 1. † Cor. iv. 4. †† 1 Thess. iv. 16.

§§ 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. ||| 1 Cor. xv. 52. ¶¶ John v. 28, 29.

** Matt. xxv. 31. †† Rev. xx. 12. ☞ Rom. ii. 12.

☞ Luke xii. 48.

shall reap also sparingly: and he which hath sowed bountifully, shall reap also bountifully *.” “Whatsoever a man hath sowed, that shall he also reap †.”

“What manner of persons ought we to be then, in all holy conversation and godliness: looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God; wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless: grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to him be glory, both now and for ever. Amen ‡.”

* 2 Cor. ix. 6.

† Gal. vi. 7.

‡ 2 Pet. iii. 11,—14, 18.

LECTURE XIII.

C R E E D.

Article VIII.—*I believe in the Holy Ghost.*

THE former articles having expressed the belief of Christians concerning the two first persons of the sacred trinity, the Father and the Son; our Creed proceeds in this to the third object of our baptismal faith, the Holy Ghost. And to explain it properly, there will be need to speak, First, Of his nature: Secondly, Of his peculiar office in the work of our redemption: Thirdly, Of the duties owing to him: Fourthly, Of the sins, which we are liable to commit against him.

I. Of the nature of the Holy Ghost, or Spirit. For *Ghost*, in the ancient use of our language, denoted the same thing, which Spirit doth now: a substance different from body or matter.

matter. Indeed we still use it, in expressing the departure of the spirit from the body; which we call *giving up the ghost*; and in speaking of supposed apparitions of the spirits of persons after their decease: Hence also the catechism mentions *ghostly dangers*; and the communion service, *ghostly counsels*; meaning such dangers, and such counsels, as relate to our spiritual part.

In like manner, the Holy Ghost is the Holy Spirit: concerning whose nature, we can know, as I told you before concerning that of the Son, only what results from the discoveries made to us in scripture. And these, though they enlighten us but in part, are both credible and sufficient. For it is no objection against believing what God hath revealed in relation to any subject, that many questions may be asked about what he hath not revealed, to which we can give no answer. And he will never expect us, in this or any matter, to apprehend more, than he hath afforded us the means of apprehending. Now the chief things, revealed in the present case, are the following.

The Holy Ghost is not merely an attribute or power of the Father, but hath a real subsistence, distinct both from the Father and the Son. For the New Testament expressly and repeatedly uses the word, *he* concerning him*: which is never used in that manner of a mere attribute or power. It ascribes to him, will and understanding†: it speaks of him as being sent by the Father, coming and acting on various occasions, relative both to the Son and to others; nay, as shewing “himself in a bodily shape, like a dove‡.”

Further, The Holy Ghost is, truly and strictly speaking, God. For the language of scripture concerning him is such, as cannot belong to any created being. He is there called, *the eternal Spirit*§, *the Lord*||: said to *quicken*, or *give life*¶; to be every where present with all good Christians*; to “search all things, yea, the deep things of God, even as the things of a man are known by his own spirit, which is in him‡.” Christ, being conceived by him, became *the Son of God*‡‡. Christians, by his dwelling in them, become *the temples of the Holy Ghost*|||, or,

* John xiv. 26. xv. 26. xvi. 13. † Rom. viii. 27. Heb. ii. 4. Compare

1 Cor. xii. 11. ‡ Luke iii. 22. § Heb. ix. 14. || 2 Cor. iii. 17.

¶ 1 Pet. iii. 18. * John xiv. 16, 17. † 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

‡‡ Luke i. 25

||| 1 Cor. vi. 19.

or, as another place expresses it, *the temples of God* *. Ananias, by lying on him, *lyed not unto men, but unto God* †. He is said, to distribute spiritual and miraculous gifts, *dividing to every man severally, as he will* ‡. “And as the disciples ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work, whereunto I have called them§.” He is represented by our Saviour, as able fully to supply the want of his personal presence with the apostles ||. And lastly, He is joined with the Father and the Son, on equal terms, both in the form of baptism, where his name and theirs are used alike ¶; and in the solemn form of blessing, where “the fellowship of the Holy Ghost” is placed on a level with “the love of God, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *.”

These, and many other scripture expressions, are surely such, as cannot be used of any creature: but prove the Spirit, as others, already mentioned to you, prove the Son, to partake of the same authority and perfections, and therefore the same nature, with the Father. Yet we know, that though in holy writ men and angels are, sometimes on account of their extensive power, sometimes as representatives of the Deity, called gods, yet in literal propriety of speech, there is but one God, and not either three Supreme Beings, or a superior and an inferior Object of adoration. “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord †.” “Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no God: I know not any ‡‡.” “Before me was no god formed: neither shall there be after me §§.” “I am the Lord,—and my glory will I not give to another |||.” “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve ¶¶.” Since then there is not a plurality of gods; and yet the Son and the Spirit are each of them God, no less than the Father: it plainly follows, that they are, in a manner by us inconceivable, so united to him, that *these three are one* **; but still, in a manner equally inconceivable, so distinguished from him, that no one of them is the other.

Now

* 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. † Acts v. 3, 4. ‡ 1 Cor. xii. 11.
§ Acts xiii. 2. || John xvi. 7. ¶ Mat. xxviii. 19. * 2 Cor. xiii. 14.
† Deut. yi. 4. ‡‡ Isa. xlv. 8. §§ Isa. xliii. 10. ||| Isa. xlii. 8.
¶¶ Mat. iv. 10. ** John v. 7.

Now certainly, in general, it is no contradiction, that things should be in one respect the same, and in another different. But the particular and explicate notion of this union and this distinction, the word of God hath not given us. Whether we are capable of apprehending it, we know not: and therefore it is no wonder in the least, that we are incapable of forming one to ourselves. For indeed we are incapable of forming clear notions concerning thousands of other things, which are unspeakably less beyond our reach. All that we can do therefore, is, to use those expressions in relation to it, which either scripture furnishes, or experience hath found useful to guard against false apprehensions: for with very imperfect ones we must be content. Thus, in speaking of the difference of the Son and Spirit from the Father and from each other, we say, with our Bible, that the Son *is begotten*, and the Spirit *proceeds*, without pretending to know any further, what these two words mean, than that each denotes something different from the other; and both something different from creation out of nothing. And this distinction giving occasion to scripture to speak of them in somewhat the same manner, as of different persons amongst men: we call them the three persons of the Trinity: not at all intending by it to say, that the word *person*, suits them in every respect that it suits us: but only to acknowledge, that as we find them thus spoken of, we doubt not but there is some sufficient ground for it. And as we find further, that in point of rank, the person of the Father is represented as supreme, the Son as subordinate to him, the Holy Spirit to both; and in point of relation to us, creation is ascribed peculiarly to the first, redemption to the second, sanctification to the third; and yet, in some sense, each of these things to each: we imitate the whole of this likewise. Still we are very sensible, at the same time, that many doubts and difficulties may be raised, almost about every part of the doctrine, than God, in his unsearchable wisdom, hath given us light enough to solve. But we apprehend it is our duty, to believe with humility and simplicity what the scripture hath taught us; and to be contentedly ignorant of what it doth not teach us; without indulging speculations and conjectures, which will only perplex the subject more, instead of clearing it. And surely it is our duty also, to interpret with candour,

candour, and use with prudent moderation whatever well-meant phrases the church of Christ, especially in its earlier days, hath applied to this subject; to think, on matters, which are both so mysterious in their nature, and so hard to be expressed, with great charity of other persons; and for ourselves, to keep close with great care to so much as is plain and practical. In order to this, I now proceed to lay before you.

II. The peculiar office of the Spirit in the work of our redemption: on account of which he is called, in our catechism, *God the Holy Ghost, who sanctified us, and all the elect people of God*. For probably he is called the Holy Spirit so frequently in scripture, and *the Spirit of holiness* once*, not merely as being perfectly holy in himself, which the Father and the Son are also, but as being the cause of holiness in believers; who are elected by God to eternal life, on foreseeing that their faith will produce obedience.

To be holy is to be pure from defilement; but particularly, in this case, from the defilement of iniquity: and being sanctified is being made holy: to which blessed change in sinful man, the Spirit of God, we are taught, contributes many ways.

In baptism we are *born again of Water and of the Spirit*†; restored by him to the state of God's children, and endued with the principles of a new, that is the Christian, life. As we grow up, it is through him, that our understandings are enlightened by the knowledge of God's will. He directed the ancient prophets in what they preached and wrote. For *holy men of old time spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*‡: which more especially testified *beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow*§. Then afterwards, when our Saviour became Man, the Holy Ghost was upon him, and accompanied him through the whole of his ministration||: and after his ascension was communicated more fully than before to his apostles; to *teach them all things needful, and bring to their remembrance whatever he had said to them*¶: so that in all their discourses for the instruction of mankind, *it was not so much they who spake, as the Spirit of the Father that spake in*
VOL. IV. S s *them.*

* Rom. i. 4. † John iii. 3, 5. ‡ 2 Pet. i. 21. § 1 Pet. i. 11.

|| Mat. iii. 16. Luke iii. 22. iv. 1. Acts i. 2. x. 38. ¶ John xiv. 26.

*them**. Nor can we doubt, but he afforded them equal assistance, at least in what they wrote for the use of all future ages. The same Spirit was also their comforter under every suffering: and, lastly, bore witness to the truth of their doctrine and our faith, by a multitude of *signs and wonders and supernatural gifts*†: by which means, and the ministry of their successors, whom likewise *the Holy Ghost made Overseers over Christ's flock*‡, the light of his gospel hath filled the world, and now shines upon us.

Nor is it outwardly alone, that he reveals and confirms to us Divine truths: but as the blessed Jesus promised, that *he should dwell in his disciples, and abide with them for ever*§; so by his inward operations, the credibility of which I shall, God willing, prove to you in its proper place, he *opens our hearts*|| to receive the word of God, influences our affections to delight in it, and excites our wills to act conformably to it: for which reasons good persons are said to *be led by the Spirit*¶; and all Christian graces to be *the fruits of the Spirit**. With the wicked *he strives*‡, till they obstinately harden themselves, and then forsakes them. But those, who yield to his motions, he *renews*††, and *strengthens with might in the inner man*§§; *helps their infirmities*, and both directs and animates their prayers, thus making, as it were, *intercession*||| within them. By this *one Spirit*, being all Christians, they are united into *one body*¶¶, and made to love each other. *By the Holy Ghost also, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts****, teaching us to look upon him, not as an austere Master, but a kind Parent; or, in the language of St Paul, to cry, *Abba, Father*‡‡. And thus *the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit*, joins with our consciences to complete the evidence, *that we are the sons of God*†††: from whence arises that *joy in the Holy Ghost*∞, which different persons have in very different degrees: and therefore no one should despond, because he feels but little, or at times perhaps nothing of it, provided he truly honours and serves God. But
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* Mat. x. 20. † Heb. ii. 4. ‡ Acts xx. 28. § John xiv. 16.

|| Acts xxvi. 14. ¶ Rom. viii. 14. * Gal. v. 22. † Gen. vi. 3.

‡‡ Tit. iii. 5. §§ Eph. iii. 16. ||| Rom. viii. 26, 27. ¶¶ Eph. iv. 4.

*** Rom. v. 5. ‡‡ Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6. ††† Rom. viii. 16.

∞ Rom. xiv. 17.

to some persons, on some occasions, the heavenly Comforter vouchsafes, both strong assurances of their good state; “(hereby know we, that God abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us *;)” and such lively consolations from it, as amount to a pledge and foretaste of happiness to come. Accordingly, they are said to be “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of their inheritance †.”

But to prevent wicked persons of enthusiastic tempers from mistaking, as they often have done, their own groundless confidence for the inward testimony of the Divine Spirit, they should be carefully reminded, that *by our fruits we are known ‡*, and must know ourselves §; that “the fruit of the Spirit is in all righteousness and truth ||,” and only “good men are full of the Holy Ghost ¶.” “For into a malicious soul he will not enter; nor dwell in the body that is subject unto sin. The Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit; and remove from thoughts, that are without understanding; and will not abide, when unrighteousness cometh in *.”

III. The next thing proposed, was to speak of the duties owing to the Holy Ghost; which, besides the general one of honouring him suitably to his nature, as God, are, in particular, to be baptized in his name, as I have already mentioned; pray for his graces; for God “giveth grace unto the humble †,” and “will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him ‡‡;” to be heartily thankful for all his good motions, and conscientiously to obey them in every instance. By this last I do not mean, that we should *believe every Spirit §§*; follow every strong imagination of our own, or pretence of light from above in others: but adhere steadily to that rule of life, which the Holy Ghost hath directed the writers of scripture to teach us, and inwardly prompts and disposes us to observe. For other inspiration, than this, being now become unnecessary; we have no reason to expect, but much reason to distrust it. But especially, if we be urged, under colour of such authority, to break any one standing precept of the gospel, or add to, or take away from, any single article of our Creed; *though*

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* 1 John iii. 24. † Eph. i. 13, 14. ‡ Mat. vii. 16. § 1 John ii. 3.

|| Eph. v. 9. ¶ Acts xi. 24. * Wisd. i. 4, 5. † James iv. 6.

‡‡ Luke xi. 13.

§§ 1 John iv. 1.

*an angel from heaven** were to require it, we are not to yield; but keep close to "the faith and holy commandment, which were once delivered to the saints †," and shall never be altered.

These then are our duties to the ever-blessed Spirit. There are likewise mentioned in scripture,

IV. Sins against him. And one of these, not all, as melancholy persons are apt to imagine, but one alone, is said by our Saviour to be unpardonable: which is *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost* †. Now, that means only, speaking reproachful words, deliberately and maliciously, against the miracles done by the power of the Holy Ghost, or the supernatural gifts proceeding from him. And the only persons, to whom Christ declared, that this should not be forgiven, were those, who had the testimony of their own senses for the reality of these miracles and gifts; and, notwithstanding the fullest evidence of their coming from the Spirit of God, obstinately persisted in reviling them, and even ascribed them to the devil. Now, there is a plain reason why this sin, under these circumstances, must be unpardonable. The persons guilty of it had stood out against all the means, which Heaven had provided for the conviction and conversion of mankind: none more powerful remained to bring them to repentance; and, as they could not be forgiven without repenting, there was plainly no way left for their recovery.

But then it is equally plain, that persons, who were not witnesses to any such miraculous powers; but live as we do, many ages after they are ceased; cannot, in this respect, sin to the same degree of guilt, since it is not against the same degree of evidence: and that as they, who were guilty of it originally, were unbelievers in Christ, so indeed no believer in him, continuing such, can possibly design, whilst his thoughts and words are in his own command, to speak evil of the Holy Ghost, or his mighty works. Nor therefore can he come under the condemnation of those, whom the epistle to the Hebrews describes, as "wilfully doing despite to the Spirit of grace;" and of whom it pronounces, that "there remains for them no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful expectation of judge-

* Gal. i. 8. † 2 Pet. ii. 21. Jude, verse 3. † Mat. xii. 31.

Mark iii. 28, 29. Luke xii. 10.

judgement *.” Believers may indeed rashly and thoughtlessly use profane words concerning the Holy Ghost : but these, though undoubtedly great offences, and too likely to make greater still, are very far from the unpardonable sin. And as for what some good persons are often terrified about, the wicked imaginations that come into their minds, and expressions that come out of their mouths, at times, almost whether they will or not ; in proportion as they are involuntary, they are not criminal in them, be they in their own nature ever so bad. When therefore poor scrupulous souls affright themselves about such things as these ; or when they who have not sinned at all against the Spirit, otherwise than as every ill action is a sin against him ; or have sinned in a quite different manner from the Jews in the gospel, and heartily repented of their sin ; when they apprehend, that notwithstanding this they cannot be pardoned ; they intirely mistake their own case : either through ignorance, or false opinions infused into them ; or excessive tenderness of mind ; or indeed more commonly by reason of some bodily disorder, though perhaps unperceived by themselves, which depresses their spirits, and clouds their understandings, and requires the help of medicine.

Another sin against the Holy Ghost, mentioned in scripture, is *lying to him* † : which means there, asserting falsehoods, being conscious that they were such, to persons inspired by him with the knowledge of mens hearts, as did Ananias and Sapphira. But the offences, which we are in danger of committing against him, are *resisting* ‡ and *quenching* § his good motions and influences, and *grieving him* || by *corrupt communication*, evil thoughts or unholy actions. These things therefore let us diligently avoid ; or, if we have fallen into them, sincerely repent of them : the opposite duties let us conscientiously practise, and stedfastly persevere in them : for so shall we “commend ourselves to God, and to the Spirit of his grace ; who is able to build us up, and give us an inheritance amongst them who are sanctified ¶ ;” to which he of his mercy bring us all, for the sake of our Redeemer Jesus Christ. Amen.

* Heb. x. 26,—29.

† Acts v. 3.

‡ Acts vii. 51.

§ 1 Thef. v. 19.

|| Eph. iv. 29, 30.

¶ Acts xx. 32.

LECTURE XIV.

C R E E D.

Article IX.—*The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints.*

THE most ancient Creeds of all went no further than a declaration of faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whose name we are baptised. For in this profession all those other points of doctrine were understood to be implied, which it was very soon after found most convenient to express by additional articles. And the first of these, is that now to be explained: wherein we declare our belief in *the Holy Catholic Church*, and *the Communion of Saints*.

The scripture word, translated *church*, originally signifies any regular and orderly assembly of persons, called to meet on any occasion. But in the Bible it signifies, almost always, a religious assembly. And when used in its largest sense there, it comprehends the whole number of good persons, in every age: all those, who from the beginning of the world, under whatever dispensation of true religion, have believed in God, and served him, according to the degree of their light; and shall in the end of it be gathered together, and rewarded by him, according to the degree of their improvement. This is *the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven*, as the epistle to the Hebrews calls it*. And since the salvation of all these is owing to Jesus Christ; the only name, by which men can be saved†, they are all, in that respect, members of the Church of Christ, how obscure and imperfect soever their knowledge of a Saviour may have been. But the word is usually taken in a narrower sense. And thus it is sometimes applied to the Jewish nation: which in the Old Testament is called by a phrase of just the same meaning, *the*
congre-

* Heb. xii. 23.

† Acts iv. 12.

congregation of the Lord*, and by St Stephen, *the church, which was in the wilderness*†. But the church more especially meant here in the Creed, is the Christian: which, though in some respects the same with the Jewish, in others differed from it; which therefore our Saviour, in the gospel, speaks of himself, as about to *build*‡; and accordingly, immediately after his ascension, in the Acts of the Apostles, we find it built: that is, we find an assembly of believers in Christ, met together at Jerusalem, under their proper teachers and governors, to worship God, and edify one another, in the manner which he appointed.

This was the original Christian Church; small indeed at first: but *the Lord*, we read, *added to the church daily such as should be saved*§; till, the gospel spreading every way, the number of Christians, which in the beginning required no more than one congregation, was of necessity divided into several. And henceforward we find many churches spoken of, at some times: yet all these many spoken of as one, at others. For since they all proceeded from the same source; are all, as the apostle argues, *one body*; and are directed by *one Spirit*; even as they are called in *one hope of their calling*; as they have *one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all*||: so are they, in great propriety of speech, though *many*, yet *one in Christ*¶. His church therefore is the whole number of those, who believe on him. How much soever they may differ in some opinions or practices, yet they are one in all things essential. How wide soever they may be dispersed throughout the world, they shall at last be *gathered together unto him**. We can judge only according to appearances: and therefore to us all those must be members of Christ's church, who make a visible profession of being Christians. But God sees every secret thought: and in his eye, they alone belong truly to his church who truly serve him in the *hidden man of the heart*†: that inward sincerity, which to human eyes is invisible. And this invisible true church of Christ here on earth is militant; carrying on a continual war against the outward temptations of the world and the devil, and the inward struggles of every wrong

* Num. xvi. 3, &c. † Acts vii. 38. ‡ Mat. xvi. 18. § Acts ii. 47.

|| Eph. iv. 4, 5.

¶ Rom. xii. 5.

* 2 Thess. ii. 1.

† 1 Peter iii. 4.

wrong inclination: till having faithfully *fought the good fight*; and really, though not perfectly, *gotten the victory* in this life; it shall, in the next, become triumphant, and receive the *crown of righteousness* *.

Such then being the church of Christ in its different states: let us proceed to consider the two qualities, ascribed to it in the Creed: that it is *holy*, and that it is *catholic*.

To be holy is to be separate from all defilement and impurity, particularly of the moral kind. Thus God is perfectly holy: angels and good men are so in their different degrees. And because nothing unclean or impure, in any sense, ought to enter into the service of God, therefore what is set apart from common use, and dedicated to his worship, is called holy also. Hence the places, times, and things, that are so employed, have that name given them. And the persons, who attend on his ministry, are stiled holy on account of their outward relation to him, whether they are really and inwardly such as they ought, or not. Now in outward profession, the whole visible church of Christ is holy: separated and distinguished from the rest of the world, by acknowledging his holy laws, and using the means of holiness, which he hath appointed. But in the inward sense, and the only one which will avail hereafter, they alone are indeed members of his holy church, who by the help of these means, do really improve themselves in piety and virtue, becoming *holy in all manner of conversation*, as *he which hath called them is holy*†: and such as are truly so here, shall be made completely so hereafter. For “Christ loved the church; and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water; and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle; but that it should be holy, and without blemish ‡.” Ask your hearts then; Are you giving your best diligence to “cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God §?” “For without it no man shall see the Lord ||.”

The word *catholic*, applied to the church in our Creed, is nowhere used in scripture; but frequently in the early Christian writers: and it means *universal*, extending to all mankind.

* 2 Tim. iv. 7. Rev. xv. 2. † 1 Pet. i. 15. ‡ Eph. v. 25,—27.

§ 2 Cor. vii. 1.

|| Heb. xii. 14.

kind. The Jewish church was not universal, but particular: for it consisted only of one nation; and their law permitted sacrifices only in one temple; nor could several other precepts of it be observed in countries at any considerable distance from thence; but the Christian consists of *every kindred, tongue and people** equally; and *offers unto the name of God in every place, from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, incense and a pure offering*†. The Catholic Church then is the universal church, spread through the world: and the Catholic faith is the universal faith; *that form of doctrine*, which the apostles *delivered*‡ to the whole church, and it received. What this faith was, we may learn from their writings, contained in the New Testament: and at so great a distance of time, we can learn it with certainty no where else. Every church or society of Christians, that preserves this catholic or universal faith, accompanied with true charity, is a part of the catholic or universal church: and because the parts are of the same nature with the whole, it hath been usual to call every church singly, which is so qualified, a Catholic church. And in this sense, churches that differ widely in several notions and customs, may, notwithstanding, each of them, be truly catholic churches. But the church of Rome, which is one of the most corrupted parts of the catholic church, both in faith and love, hath presumed to call itself the whole Catholic Church, the universal church: which it no more is, than one diseased limb, though perhaps the larger for being diseased, is the whole body of a man. And by attempting to exclude us, they take the direct way to exclude themselves, unless God impute their uncharitable way of thinking and acting, as we hope he will, to excusable ignorance and mistake. The church of England pretends not indeed, absurdly, to be the whole catholic church; but is undoubtedly a sound and excellent member of it. So that we have much better ground to call ourselves Catholics than they; were such names worth disputing about, which they are not: only one would not flatter and harden them, by giving them a title, which they both claim unjustly, and turn into an argument against us.

In this *holy catholic church* our Creed professes belief. But the meaning is not, that we engage to believe all things, with-

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* Rev. v. 9.

† Mal. i. 11.

‡ Rom. vi. 17.

out exception, of which the majority of the church, at any time, shall be persuaded: and much less, what the rulers of it, or, it may be, a small part of them, who may please to call themselves the church, shall at any time require: for then we must believe many plain falsehoods, uncertainties without number, and contrary doctrines, as contrary parties prevail. Our church doth indeed believe whatever the first and best ages of Christianity thought necessary: whatever all the other churches of the present age agree in. But this is more, than we declare in the Creed. For there, as believing in God, means only believing that there is a God; and believing in the resurrection, means only believing that there shall be a resurrection: so believing in the holy catholic church, means only believing that by our Saviour's appointment there was founded, and through his mercy shall ever continue, a society of persons, of what nation or nations is indifferent, who have faith in his name, and obey his laws: not indeed without being deformed and disfigured, by mixtures both of sin and error; but still, without being destroyed by either. For as he hath promised, that *the gates of hell, or of the invisible world, that is, persecution and death, shall not prevail against his church**, so neither shall any other power. Nothing shall abolish it: though several things may obscure and corrupt it. That sin doth, we see: why then may not error too? It is certainly not a worse thing: nor is our Saviour's promise a greater security against the one, than the other. He requires us indeed to *hear the church*. But in what case? *If thy brother trespass against thee, admonish him privately*. This relates then, not to disputed speculative opinions, but to known practical transgressions against our neighbour. *If he neglect private admonition, tell it unto the church*. Not surely the whole catholic church, all over the world; that is impossible: but the particular church to which you both belong. Now, all sides allow, that every particular church is fallible; and therefore to be heard no farther, than it appears to be in the right. It follows next: *And if he neglect to hear the church; if he will not reform his injurious behaviour on a public warning, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican†*: treat him no longer with the tenderness and regard, that is due to a good Christian;

* Mat. xvi. 18.

† Mat. xviii. 15,—17.

Christian; but consider him in the same light with an infidel sinner, till he makes reparation. This rule therefore by no means proves the infallibility, even of the universal church, and much less of the Romish, which is far from universal; but relates to a matter intirely different. And it still remains true, that professing to believe in the holy catholic church, is only acknowledging, that Christ hath formed the whole number of his followers, under him their Head, into one regular and sacred body or society, to last for ever: the unity and holiness of which is to be carefully preserved by what the latter part of this article specifies,

The Communion of Saints. The word, *saints*, is of the same meaning with the the word *holy*: and therefore comprehends all Christians, in the manner which I have just explained. Having *communion*, is being intitled to partake of benefits and kindnesses, and bound to make suitable returns for them. And thus Christians, or saints, have communion or *fellowship* with the Father, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift: with his Son Jesus Christ*, through whom forgiveness and mercy are conveyed to us: with the Holy Ghost, whose sanctifying graces are conferred on such as duly qualify their hearts for the reception of them. And for these blessings we owe all thankfulness, and all duty, in thought, word, and deed. Christians have also communion with the holy angels; as these are *ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation*†. And undoubtedly we ought to think of what they do for us, with an inward sense of gratitude and love. But as we are unacquainted with particulars, we can make no particular acknowledgements: nor ought we to make any general ones, by outward expressions of respect; since *worshipping God alone* is commanded‡, and *worshipping angels* condemned§, in scripture.

With respect to those of our own nature, we are bound so far to hold communion, even with the worst of unbelievers, as not only to do them every kind of justice, but sincerely to wish, and, if occasion offer, heartily endeavour their good, both in body and soul. But to all, *who have obtained the like precious faith with ourselves*||, we bear a still nearer relation; as

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being,

* 1 John i. 3. Jam. i. 17.

† Heb. i. 14.

‡ Mat. iv. 10.

§ Col. ii. 18.

|| 2 Pet. i. 1.

being, in a peculiar sense, children of the same Father, disciples of the same Master, animated by the same Spirit, members of the same body. And these things oblige us to the utmost care of preserving, by prudent order and mutual forbearance, as much unity in the church, as possibly we can. Such indeed, as obstinately deny the fundamental doctrines, or transgress the fundamental precepts of Christianity, ought to be rejected from Christian communion. But to renounce communicating with any others, who are willing to admit us to it on lawful terms, is the way to cut off ourselves, not them, from the body of Christ: who yet, we doubt not, will allow those on both sides to belong to his church, who, through pardonable passions or mistakes, will not allow one another to do so.

And as we should maintain communion with all proper persons, we show our disposition to it in all proper ways: attend on the public instruction, join in the public worship, sacraments and discipline, which our Lord hath appointed; and keep the whole of them pure from all forbidden, or suspicious alterations or mixtures: avoid, with great care, both giving and taking needless offence, in respect to these, or any matters; and, by all fit means, *edify one another in love**: obeying those who are set over us; condescending to those who are beneath us; esteeming and honouring the wise and virtuous; teaching and admonishing the ignorant and faulty; bearing with the weak, relieving the poor, and comforting the afflicted.

Nor have we communion only with the saints on earth: but are of one city, and one family, with such, as are already got safe to heaven. Doubtless they exercise that communion towards us, by loving and praying for their brethren, whom they have left behind them. And we are to exercise it towards them, not by addressing petitions to them, which we are neither authorised to offer, nor have any ground to think they can hear; but by rejoicing in their happiness, thanking God for the grace which he hath bestowed on them, and the examples which they have left us: holding their memories in honour, imitating their virtues; and beseeching the Disposer of all things, that having followed them in holiness here, we may meet

* Rom. xiv. 19. Eph. iv. 16.

meet them in happiness hereafter ; and become, in the fullest sense, *Fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God* * : *having, with all those that are departed in the true faith of his holy name, our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in his eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen* †.

* Eph. ii. 19.

† Burial Office.

LECTURE XV.

C R E E D.

Article X.—*The Forgiveness of Sins.*

WE are now come to that article of the Creed, for which all the preceding ones have been preparing the way: a doctrine, of the greatest comfort to believe, and the utmost danger to misapprehend. I shall therefore endeavour clearly to explain,

- I. The nature of sin, its different kinds, and its guilt.
- II. The nature and conditions of the forgiveness promised to it.

I. The nature of sin. Both men and all other beings, endued with sufficient reason, must perceive a difference between different inclinations and actions, of their own and others : in consequence of which, they must approve some, as right and good ; and disapprove others, as wrong and evil. Now this distinction, which we are capable of seeing, God must see as much more clearly, as his understanding is more perfect than ours. Therefore he must entirely love what is good, and utterly hate what is evil : and his will must be, that all his rational creatures should practise the former, and avoid the latter

ter. This he makes known to be his will, in some degree, to all men, however ignorant, by natural conscience; and hath more fully made known to us, by the revelation of his holy word: wherein also, besides those things, which we of ourselves might have known to be fit, he hath signified his pleasure, that we should observe some further rules, which he knew to be useful and requisite, though we should otherwise not have discerned it. Now, the will and pleasure of a person having authority, as God hath absolute authority, is, when sufficiently notified, a law. Those laws of his, which human reason was able to teach us, are called natural or moral laws: those, which he hath added to them, are called positive ones. Obedience to both sorts is our duty; transgression of either is sin: whether it be by neglecting what the law commands, which is a sin of omission; or doing what it forbids, which is a sin of commission.

Further, As God hath a right to give us laws, he must have a right to punish us, if we break them. And we all of us feel inwardly, that sin deserves this punishment: which feeling is what we call a sense of guilt. Some sins have more guilt, that is, deserve greater punishment than others: because they are either worse in their own nature; or accompanied with circumstances, that aggravate, instead of alleviating them. Thus, if bad actions, known to be such, are done with previous deliberation and contrivance, which are called wilful or presumptuous sins; they are very highly criminal. But if we do amiss in some smaller matter, through inconsiderateness or other weakness of mind, or else through a sudden unforeseen attack of temptation; which are usually called sins of infirmity or surprise: these, though real, are yet less offences. And if, lastly, we act wrong through invincible ignorance, that is, have no means of knowing better; then the action is not, strictly speaking, a fault in us, though it be in itself. But if we might, with a reasonable attention, have known our duty, and did not attend; we are justly blameable, even for a careless ignorance, and full as much for a designed one, as if we had known ever so well.

Another difference in the kinds of sins is this: that though they be only in smaller instances; yet if persons take so little pains to guard against them, that they live in a constant or frequent

frequent practice of them, which are called habitual sins ; the guilt of these may be full as heavy as that of greater transgressions, provided they be less common. But if they be great and habitually indulged also ; that makes the worst of cases.

Committing sin can never be a slight matter. For it is acting as our own hearts tell us we ought not. It is likewise, for the most part, injuring, one way or another, our fellow-creatures : and it is always behaving undutifully and ungratefully to our Creator, who hath sovereign power over us, and shows continual goodness to us. We may be sure therefore, that the punishment, due to the least sin, is such as will give us cause to wish from the bottom of our souls, that we had never done it. More enormous ones are of worse desert, according to their degree. And since recompences proportionable to them are not, with any constancy, distributed in this world ; as certainly as God is just, they will in the next ; unless we obtain forgiveness in the mean time. And all will be made miserable, as long as they are wicked.

This is the main of what human abilities unassisted seem capable of discovering to us concerning sin and its consequences ; excepting it be, that as we have a natural approbation of what is good, so we have, along with it, a natural proneness to what is evil : an inconsistency, for which reason finds it hard, if possible, to account.

But here most seasonably revelation comes in ; and teaches, not indeed all that we might wish, but all that we need to know of this whole matter : that our first parents were created upright ; but soon transgressed a plain and easy command of God, intended for a trial of their obedience : by which they perverted and tainted their minds ; forfeited the immortality, which God had designed them ; brought diseases and death on their bodies ; and derived to us the same corrupt nature and mortal condition, to which they had reduced themselves. An imperfect illustration of this lamentable change, and I give it for no other, we may have from our daily experience, that wretched poverty, fatal distempers, and even vicious inclinations, often descend from parents to their children. Now, the sinful dispositions, which our origin from our primitive parents hath produced in us, are called original sin. And this transgression of theirs may, very consistently with Divine justice,

tice, occasion, as the scripture shows it hath, our being condemned, as well as they, to temporal sufferings and death. For even innocent creatures have no right to be exempt from them: and to fallen creatures they are peculiarly instructive and medicinal. The same transgression may also, with equal justice, occasion our being exposed to a more difficult trial of our obedience, than we should else have undergone; indeed than we should be able, by the strength which remains in us, to support. And thus, were we left to ourselves, we must, in consequence of the fall of our first progenitors, become finally miserable. But God is ready to give us more strength, if we will ask it: and he may undoubtedly subject us to any difficulties that he pleases, provided he bestows on us, whether naturally or supernaturally, the power of going through them in the manner that he expects from us: which he certainly doth bestow on all men. And if they use it, they will be accepted by him in a proper degree: what that is, we are no judges.

But when, instead of resisting our bad inclinations, as thro' the grace of God we may, we voluntarily follow and indulge them; then we fall into actual sin; and are in strictness of speech guilty, and deserving of punishment. And this punishment the scripture frequently expresses by the name of death. For death being the most terrible to human nature, of all the punishments that man inflicts; it is used to signify the most terrible, that God inflicts; even those which extend beyond death, and are therefore called, *the second death* *. Accordingly our Saviour directs his followers: *Be not afraid of them that kill the body; and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear. Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him* †.

The nature and duration of the future sufferings, reserved for sinners, are most awfully described in the word of God: the declarations of which concerning them I shall soon have occasion to lay before you. But in the mean while we all know them to be such, as may abundantly suffice to engage us in a most serious inquiry, how we shall obtain what was proposed to be explained,

II. *The forgiveness of sins.* Now this much our own reason evidently teaches; that when we have done amiss, we are to

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* Rev. xx. 14. xxi. 8.

† Luke xii. 4, 5.

undo it, as far as we can. We are to disapprove it, and be sorry for it, as we have great cause; to beg pardon of God, for having offended him; to make the best amends we are able to our fellow-creatures, if we have injured them; to be very humble in our hearts, and very watchful in our future conduct. These things, through God's help, we can do: and these are all, that nature directs us to do. Undoubtedly he will never accept less: but the question is, whether he will so far accept this, as to be reconciled to us upon it. Since wickedness deserves punishment, it may be justly punished. Being sorry for it, is not being innocent of it. And the most careful obedience afterwards no more makes a compensation for what went before, than avoiding to run into a new debt pays off the old one: besides that we never obey so well, as not to add continually some degree of fresh misbehaviour. God indeed is merciful; but he is equally righteous and holy, and abhorrent of sin. And what can the mere light of our own understandings discover to us, with any assurance, from these attributes joined? We see, that in this world the most merciful rulers, if they are just and wise also, which God is, often punish even those offenders, who repent the most heartily. The honour and good order of their government requires it. And why may not he have reasons of the same, or even of a different nature, for doing the same thing?

Still the case of penitents must be more favourable, than that of others. And there is ground for all such to hope, that such pity, as can, will be shown them in some manner, though they cannot be sure how, or to what effect. And God hath been pleased to confirm this hope, from time to time, by various revelations, gradually unfolding his gracious designs: till, by the coming of our blessed Lord, the whole purpose of his goodness was opened; as far as it is proper, that mortals should be acquainted with it.

From these revelations, contained in the Bible, we learn, that repentance alone, even the completest, would not be sufficient to reinstate us fully in God's favour; much less the poor endeavours towards it, which we of ourselves are capable of using: but that our pardon and salvation depend on the compassionate intercession of a Mediator appointed by our heavenly Father: that a person, who should deliver mankind from the bitter fruits of their transgressions, had in general been

promised, and the promise been believed, from the earliest ages; and more particular notices of him gradually imparted to the successive generations of the chosen people: that at length, in the season which infinite Wisdom saw to be fittest; he appeared on earth, in the character of the only begotten Son of God; taught his followers the precepts, and set them the example, of perfect piety and virtue; and after bearing cheerfully, for this purpose, all the inconveniences of mortal life, submitted to suffer a cruel death from wicked men, provoked by the perfections, which they ought to have adored: that this voluntary sacrifice of himself, the Almighty was pleased to accept from him, whose divine nature, united to the human, gave it unspeakable value, as a reason for entering into a covenant of mercy with all those, who should be influenced, by faith in his doctrines, to obey his laws: that still, neither our obedience, nor our faith itself, is at all meritorious, or in any degree the cause of our acceptance; for they are both of them God's gift; and they are both, through our fault, very imperfect: but that yet thankful belief in Christ, as our Saviour from the power and the punishment of sin, *working by love** to our Maker, our Redeemer, our Sanctifier, our fellow-creatures, is appointed the condition of our obtaining, and the instrument of our receiving, pardon.

The reasons of this appointment *we see, as through a glass darkly*†: yet enough of them to convince us of its being *the wisdom of God*, though *in a mystery*‡. With respect to ourselves, it hath the most powerful tendency to inspire us with humility, gratitude and diligence. With respect to the blessed Jesus, it was a fit reward for what he had done and suffered, to take those into favour again, for whom he had interested himself with such inexpressible goodness. And with respect to God, it was a strong demonstration of his concern for the glory of his attributes, and the honour of his government, that he would not be reconciled to sinners on any other terms, than such an interposition of such a person in their behalf: which yet, since he himself provided, as well as accepted, his kindness to us is no less, than if he pardoned us without it. Thus then did *mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and*

* Gal. v. 6.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 7.

peace

*peace kiss each other**; and God show himself *just, and yet the justifier of them which believe in Jesus* †.

But then we must always remember, that none will be forgiven and made happy by the means of Christ, but they who are reformed and made holy by his means: that his sacrifice is not to stand instead of our repentance and amendment; but is the consideration which induces God first to work in us pious dispositions, then to accept us, if we cultivate and exert them faithfully.

Perhaps the benefit of this sacrifice may extend, in a very valuable, though inferior degree, even to those who had little or no knowledge of him who offered it. But in such questions we have no concern. Our business is to take care that it may extend to us, by embracing, with an active as well as joyful faith, the gracious tenders of the gospel dispensation.

Indeed the first advantage, that we have from it, is before we are capable of knowing our happiness, at the time of our baptism. For baptism restores the infants of believing parents, as will be proved hereafter, in explaining it, to that assurance of immortal life, which our first parents lost, and we by consequence. But when administered to persons of riper years, as it conveys a further privilege, the pardon of their former actual sins, it also requires a suitable condition, the exercise of an actual faith, such as will produce future obedience. And as infants are baptized only on presumption of their coming to have this faith in due time; so, if they live, and refuse to be instructed in it, or despise it, their baptism will avail them nothing. For it is a covenant: at first indeed made for us; but to be afterwards acknowledged and ratified by us, as it is in confirmation. And in this covenant we engage, on our part, to keep ourselves, with an honest care, free from sin: and God engages, on his, to consider us, (not because of our care, tho' on condition of it, but for the sake of Christ,) as free from guilt; notwithstanding such infirmities and failings as may overtake well-meaning persons. He will not look on these as breaches of his covenant, but readily pass them over; provided we make a general confession of them in our daily prayers, and strive against them with a reasonable diligence. For

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* Psal. lxxxv. 10.

† Rom. iii. 26.

such things we cannot expect to avoid entirely : but greater offences we may. And therefore, if we fall into any habitual wickedness, or any single act of gross and deliberate sin; we forfeit the happiness, to which our baptism intitles us: and if we continue impenitent, the more privileges we have enjoyed, the more severely we shall be punished. For *to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required**.

But if God allows us time; and we make use of it, not only to be sorry for having lived ill, for this alone is not gospel penitence; but to be sorry from a principle of conscience; and to show of what sort our sorrow is, by living well afterwards, in all those respects, in which we have been faulty, we become again entitled to the Divine favour. For though the scripture declares it *impossible to renew* some sinners to *repentance*†: yet if this be taken strictly, it can mean only *blasphemers against the Holy Ghost*‡. Besides, *impossible*, in all languages, often signifies no more than extremely difficult: and *with God all things are possible*§. Experience proves, that great numbers are *renewed to repentance*; and that they shall not be forgiven, when they repent, is nowhere said. It is true, *their remains no more sacrifice for sin*||, no other method of salvation, than that, to which they have lost their claim. But still, if they humbly apply for a fresh interest in it; since the apostle directs all Christians to *restore such* to their communion, as brethren, *in the spirit of meekness*¶; there can be no doubt, but God will receive them, as a Father, with pity, and mercy. Indeed, the words of St John alone would be sufficient to banish all despondency from the breast of every Christian penitent. *My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins**.

You see then the inestimable goodness of God, in providing means, by which we not only shall be pardoned, but have the comfort of knowing beforehand, that we shall. But then you see also the only terms, on which we are to expect it. And these are, not that we live on in a circle of sinning and repenting; not that we abstain from some sins, and indulge others: but that we so repent of all our sins, as not wilfully to sin again.

* Luke xii. 48.

† Heb. vi. 4, 6.

‡ Matth. xii. 31.

§ Mat. xix. 26.

|| Heb. x. 26.

¶ Gal. vi. 1.

* 1 John ii. 1, 2.

gain. And till we are arrived at this, we must never think ourselves in a safe condition. For, as on the one hand, *if the wicked man turn from his wickedness, he shall live* *; so, on the other, *if the righteous man turn from his righteousness, he shall die* †. *Blessed are they, whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Blessed are they, to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile* ‡.

* Ezek. xviii. 21, 27.

† Ezek. xxiv.

‡ Psal. xxxii. 1, 2.

LECTURE XVI.

C R E E D.

Articles XI, XII. Part I.—*The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.*

THE Resurrection of the body and life everlasting being the consequences of the preceding article, the forgiveness of sins, our belief of that comfortable truth leads us naturally to believe these also. And as they complete the whole of what we are concerned to know; so here the profession of our faith happily concludes, having brought us to the *end of our faith, the salvation of our souls* *.

But, tho' this part of our Creed expresses only two things; yet it implies two more: and so comprehends the four following particulars:

I. That the souls of all men continue after death.

II. That their bodies shall at the last day be raised up, and reunited to them.

III. That both souls and bodies of good persons shall enjoy everlasting happiness.

IV. That

* 1 Pet. i. 9.

IV. That those of the wicked shall undergo everlasting punishment.

I. That the souls of all men continue after death. We are every one of us capable of perceiving and thinking, judging and resolving, loving and hating, hoping and fearing, rejoicing and grieving. That part of us, which doth these things, we call the mind or soul. Now plainly this is not the body. Neither our limbs, nor our trunk, nor even our head, is what understands, and reasons, and wills, and likes or dislikes: but something, that hath its abode within the head*, and is unseen. A little consideration will make any of you sensible of this. Then further: Our bodies increase, from an unconceivable smallness to a very large bulk, and waste away again; and are changing, each part of them, more or less, every day. Our souls, we know, continue all the while the same. Our limbs may be cut off one after another, and perish: yet the soul not be impaired by it in the least. All feeling and motion may be lost almost throughout the body, as in the case of an universal palsy: yet the soul have lost nothing. And tho' some diseases do indeed disorder the mind; there is no appearance, that any have a tendency to destroy it. On the contrary, the greatest disorders of the understanding are often accompanied with firm health and strength of body: and the most fatal distempers of the body are attended, to the very moment of death, with all possible vigour and liveliness of understanding. Since therefore these two are plainly different things; though we know no further, there would be no reason to conclude, that one of them dies, because the other doth. But since we do know further, that it can survive so many changes of the other; this alone affords a fair probability, that it may survive the great change of death. Indeed, whatever is once in being, we are to suppose continues in being, till the contrary appears. Now the body, we perceive, becomes at death insensible, and corrupts. But to imagine the same thing of the soul, in which we perceive no change at that time, would be almost as groundless, as if having frequently heard the music of an organ, but never seen the person that played on it, we should suppose him dead, on finding the instrument incapable

* In quo igitur loco est (mens)? Credo equidem in capite: & cur credam, adferre possum. Cic. Tusc. Disp. l. i. c. 29.

incapable of playing any more. For the body is an instrument adapted to the soul. The latter is our proper Self: the former is but something joined to us for a time. And though, during that time, the connection is very close; yet nothing hinders, but we may be as well after the separation of our soul from our present body, as we were before, if not better.

Then consider further: When the body dies, only the present composition and frame of it is dissolved, and falls in pieces: not the least single particle, of all that make it up, returns to nothing; or can do, unless God, who gave it being, thinks fit to take that being away. Now we have no reason to imagine the soul made up of parts, though the body is. On the contrary, so far as the acutest reasoners are able to judge, what perceives and wills, must be one uncompounded substance. And not being compounded, it cannot be dissolved, and therefore probably cannot die*.

God indeed may put an end to it, when he pleases. But since he hath made it of a nature to last for ever, we cannot well conceive, that he will destroy it after so short a space, as that of this life: especially considering, that he hath planted in our breasts an earnest desire of immortality, and a horror at the thought of ceasing to be. It is true, we dread also the death of our bodies, and yet we own they must die: but then we believe, that they were not at first intended to die: and that they shall live again wonderfully improved. God hath in no case given us natural dispositions and hopes, which he purposed at the same time to disappoint: much less, when they are such, that the wisest and best men feel the most of them, and are made still wiser and better by them.

Besides, there are plainly in our souls capacities for vastly higher improvements, both in knowledge and goodness, than any one arrives at in this life. The best inclined, and most industrious, undeniably have not near time enough to become what they could be. And is it likely, that beings qualified for doing so much should have so little opportunity for it; and sink into nothing, without ever attaining their proper maturity and perfection? But further: Not to urge, that happiness here is very unequally divided between persons equally intitled to it; which yet is hard to reconcile with God's impartial

* See Cic. Tusc. Disp. l. 29.

tial bounty: it hath been already observed, in speaking of the judgment to come, that though, in general, the course of things in this world doth bear witness to God's love of virtue, and hatred of sin; yet, in multitudes of particular cases, nothing of this kind appears. Not only good persons often undergo, in common with others, the largest shares of evil in life; and bad persons enjoy, in common with others, the highest degrees of prosperity in it: but the former are frequently sufferers, and sometimes even to death, for the very sake of their duty; and the latter gain every sort of worldly advantage by the very means of their wickedness. Yet evidently there is a difference between right behaviour and wrong; and God must see this difference: and his will must be, that mankind should observe it: and accordingly we feel ourselves inwardly bound so to do. Now, is it possible, that a Being of perfect justice and holiness, of infinite wisdom and power, should have ordered things so, that obeying him and our own consciences should ever make us miserable, and disobeying them prove beneficial to us, on the whole? We cannot surely imagine, that he will permit any one such case to happen. And therefore, since in this world such cases do happen; this world is not our final state: but another will come after it, in which every one shall be recompensed according to his works. Without this belief, religion and virtue would often want sufficient motives: with it they never can: and therefore this belief is true.

Strongly as these arguments prove the doctrine of a life after death; yet it receives a considerable addition of strength from the universal agreement of all mankind in it, with but few exceptions, from the very beginning. Of the earliest ages indeed we have only short accounts: yet enough to judge, what their notions of this point were. What could they be indeed, when they knew, that Abel, with whom God declared himself pleased, was murdered by his brother for that very reason? Surely his brother's hatred did not do him more harm, than God's love of him did him good. That would be thinking lowly indeed of the Almighty. And therefore, since plainly he had not the benefit of his piety here, there must be another place, in which he received it. Again, when *Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him**: could

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* Gen. v. 24.

this peculiar favour be only depriving him, before his natural time, of the enjoyments of the present state? Must it not be admitting him to those of a future one? When God called himself, in a distinguished sense, *the God of Abraham* and the patriarchs, what had they enjoyed in this life, answerable to so extraordinary a manner of speaking? Many, in all likelihood, both equalled and exceeded them in worldly satisfaction: But *therefore*, as the epistle to the Hebrews teaches, *God was not ashamed to be called their God, because he had prepared for them a heavenly city*. When *Jacob* confessed himself a pilgrim and stranger on earth, he plainly declared, as the same epistle observes, that *he desired a better country** for his home. Again, when mourning for the supposed death of his son Joseph, he saith, *he will go down to him*: we translate the next word wrongly, *into the grave* †, as if he meant to have his body laid by him: that could not be; for he thought him devoured by wild beasts: it means, into the invisible state, the state of departed souls. And in this sense it is said of several of the patriarchs, that *they were gathered unto their people* ‡, and of *all that generation*, which lived with Joshua, that *they were gathered unto their fathers* §.

In the time of Moses we find, that even the heathens had a strong notion of another life. For they had built a superstitious practice upon it, of seeking to the dead ||, and enquiring of them concerning things to come. A foolish and wicked custom indeed: but however, it shows the belief was deeply rooted in them. And though future recompences were not, directly and expressly, either promised to good persons, or threatened to bad, in the law of Moses: yet that might be, not because they were unknown, but because God thought them sufficiently known; and for reasons of unsearchable wisdom, did not think proper, that Moses should make any considerable addition to that knowledge: of which there was the less occasion, as temporal rewards and punishments were more equally administered by Providence amongst the Jews, than any other people. Besides, a life to come is not mentioned in the laws of our own nation neither: though we know, they were made by such, as professed firmly to believe it. And

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* Heb. xi. 13,—16. † Gen. xxxvii. 35. ‡ Gen. xxv. 8. xxxv. 29.

xlix. 29. § Judg. ii. 10. || Deut. xviii. 9,—12.

the reason is, partly that national laws are more immediately designed to procure men peace and prosperity on earth, than happiness in heaven: and partly also, that they propose such encouragements, as they are able to inflict; which are those of this world only. Moses indeed went beyond the sanctions, which are in man's power: and assured the Jews of God's blessings on their obedience, and curses on their disobedience. But as, in so doing, he spoke, not so much to single persons considered singly, as to the whole people in a body; these blessings and curses could be only, what they were, those of the present life: because the division of mankind into nations will subsist no longer; and therefore national good or evil can be enjoyed or suffered only here. But still, since it is evident, through the whole of his law, that the Jews had the most serious belief of a just Providence; and also from the above-mentioned proofs, that they believed a future state; surely they must believe in general, that this Providence would be so exerted in that state, as to reward the good, and punish the wicked. More and stronger evidences of this will be given under the second particular, *the resurrection of the body*.

At present I shall go on to observe further, that not only the Jews, but all the nations of the world, whether learned or unlearned, whether known in former times or discovered of later times, appear to have been persuaded, that the souls of men continue after death. Now this so universal agreement must surely have arisen from an inward principle of nature, dictating to all persons that they are designed for a future existence; and that as they are plainly creatures accountable for their actions, yet often do not account here, they must expect to do it hereafter. Or should the notion be supposed to have its origin from tradition; that tradition must have been derived from what God himself had taught the first of men: else it had never reached to all men: and it must have found some powerful confirmation in the minds and hearts of men: else in so great a length of time, amidst so many changes of human circumstances, it must have been universally worn out and forgotten.

Indeed, before our Saviour's days, length of time, and folly, and wickedness, had every where obscured and darkened this great truth, by fabulous additions and absurd alterations: which hindered the good influence of it on some persons, and
discredited

discredited the belief of it with others. And had there been none of these obstacles thrown in their way; though reason and conscience teach the doctrine of a future state; yet by the generality of men, reason is little exercised, and conscience little consulted, in relation to unwelcome truths. And tho' the Old Testament gave some further intimations of it; yet these were neither very clear and explicate, nor known by the greatest part of the world. No wonder then if their conclusions, concerning a matter so intirely out of sight, were often doubtful, and often false: and thus they were misled in a subject of the greatest importance to them of all others. It is therefore one inestimable benefit of the Christian revelation, that our blessed Lord hath thoroughly removed the preceding uncertainties and errors; and *brought life and immortality to perfect light through the gospel* *: not only confirming by divine authority whatever had been rationally taught before; but adding, by the same authority, several interesting particulars, which human faculties could not discover: and which partly have been mentioned to you, in discoursing on the general judgment; and partly will be, in what I shall further say under the heads now proposed.

All that remains to be said under the first, is, That neither the full reward of good persons deceased is as yet bestowed on them, nor the full punishment of the wicked as yet inflicted; these things being to follow the general resurrection: but that still, since our Saviour describes the soul of Lazarus, as *carried by angels into Abraham's bosom*, and there *comforted* †; since he promised the penitent thief, that he should *be that day with him in paradise* ‡; and St Paul speaks of being *present with Christ*, as the immediate consequence of death, and *far better* § than this life: therefore the state of those, *who die in the Lord*, is now a state, not of insensibility, but happiness: wherein they are *blest*, in *resting from their labours* ||; and doubtless *rejoice*, with *joy unspeakable and full of glory* ¶, in the prospect of that completer felicity, which the righteous Judge of all will hereafter give them.

For as to the pretence of a purgatory, where the greatest part of good persons are to suffer grievous temporal punishments,

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* 2 Tim. i. 10.

† Luke xvi. 22, 25.

‡ Luke xxiii. 43.

§ 2 Cor. v. 8. Phil. i. 23.

|| Rev. xiv. 13

¶ 1 Pet. i. 8.

ments, after death, for their sins, though the eternal punishment is remitted: it hath no ground in the least. Our Saviour's saying, "that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven in this world, or that which is to come*," is merely saying, it shall not be forgiven at all, but punished both here and hereafter. "The prison, out of which," he saith, the person, who agrees not with his brother, "shall not come, till he hath paid the last farthing †;" is either a literal prison of this world, or the prison of hell in the next, out of which the contentious and uncharitable shall never come, for they can never pay the last farthing. "The spirits in prison," to whom St Peter, saith, "Christ by his Spirit preached," he saith also, were "the disobedient in the days of Noah ‡," with whom "his Spirit strove §," whilst they were on this earth: and who for their disobedience were sent, not to purgatory, but to a worse confinement. When St Paul bids men "take heed how they build on the foundation" of Christianity; adding, that the "fire shall try every man's work; and if any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but still shall be saved, yet so as by fire ||:" he means, that persons must not mix doctrines of their own invention with the gospel of Christ, which in this instance, amongst others, those of the church of Rome have done: for when "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire ¶," to judge the world, such notions will not stand the trial; they that hold them will be losers by them; and though still they may be saved, it will be with difficulty and danger: as a person escapes, when his house is burning. When, lastly, many of the ancient Christians prayed for the dead; besides that they had no warrant for so doing, it was only for the completion of their happiness, whom they apprehended to be already in paradise: it was for the apostles, saints, and martyrs; for the blessed virgin herself: whom they certainly did not think to be in purgatory. And observe, if they prayed for them, they did not pray to them. Purgatory then is nothing, but an imaginary place, invented by men, to give bad persons hope, and good persons dread of being put into it; that they may get what they can from both, by
pretending

* Mat. xii. 31, 32. † Mat. v. 26. ‡ 1 Pet. iii. 18,—20.

§ Gen. vi. 3. || 1 Cor. iii. 10,—15. ¶ 2 Thess. i. 7.

pretending to deliver them out of it again. Fear not therefore such vain terrors. "The souls of the righteous are in the hands of the Lord: and there shall no torment touch them *."

Those of the wicked, on the contrary, as they are to be hereafter with the devils, we may justly believe are, like them, now *delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment* †: and though the worst of their sufferings shall not begin, till the day of judgment comes; yet are they represented by our Saviour, as being, instantly after death, in a place, where they are *tormented* ‡: and undoubtedly, the loss of their past pleasures and gains, remorse for their past follies and crimes, despair of pardon, and the *fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour them* §; cannot but make their intermediate state intensely miserable: and what then will their final one be! God grant, that thinking frequently and seriously of these awful subjects, *we may know and consider, in this our day, the things that belong to our peace, before they are for ever hid from our eyes* ||.

* Wisd. iii. 1.

† 2 Pet. ii. 4.

‡ Luke xvi. 25.

§ Heb. x. 27.

|| Luke xix. 42.

LECTURE XVII.

C R E E D.

Articles XI, XII. Part II.—*The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.*

UNDER the two last Articles of the Creed, as I have already observed to you, are comprehended four points of doctrine:

I. That

- I. That the souls of all men continue after death.
- II. That their bodies shall at the last day be raised up, and reunited to them.
- III. That both souls and bodies of good persons shall enjoy everlasting happiness.
- IV. That those of the wicked shall undergo everlasting punishment.

The first of these being the foundation of the rest ; I chose to enlarge on the proof and explanation of it. Now I proceed to show,

II. That the bodies of all men shall be raised up again, and reunited to their souls. This reason alone cannot prove : and accordingly the heathens were ignorant of it : but it carries with it no contradiction to reason in the least. For God is infinite, both in power and knowledge : and it is unquestionably as possible to bring together and enliven the scattered parts of our body again, as it was to make them out of nothing, and give them life, at first. And therefore, since we must acknowledge the original formation of our bodies to have been of God, we have abundant cause to be assured, that he can, after death, form them anew, whenever he pleases. And that this will be done, was probably implied in that general promise, made to our first parents, that *the Seed of the Woman*, our blessed Lord, *should bruise the serpent's head* * ; destroy his power : and consequently take away the curse, under which he had brought mankind. For as part of that curse consists in the death of the body, it cannot be completely taken away, but by the resurrection of the body. In after-times, Abraham, we find, had so strong belief of the possibility of this article, that he was willing, on the Divine command, to sacrifice his son : *reasoning*, as the epistle to the Hebrews teaches us, *that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead* †. And indeed he could not have been induced to this, by any other reasoning. God had promised him, that by his son Isaac he should have a numerous posterity : and this promise he firmly believed. Now he must know, it could never be fulfilled, if Isaac was to be sacrificed, but by his rising again : and therefore he must be persuaded, that he would rise again for that purpose. On proceeding somewhat further in the sacred history,

* Gen. iii. 15.

† Heb. xi. 19.

tory, we find Job expressing himself on this head, if we at all understand his words, in very strong terms: "I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my skin, this body be destroyed*; yet in my flesh shall I see God†." Again, when Elijah was taken up alive into heaven, this must surely give an expectation, that the body, as well as the soul, was to partake of future happiness. And when the several persons, mentioned in the Old Testament, were raised up to life in this world, it could not but increase the probability of a general resurrection in the next. Then in the book of Daniel we have an express declaration, that a time should come, when "they who slept in the dust of the earth, should awake: some to everlasting life, and some to shame, and everlasting contempt‡." And indeed, when those, whom we commonly call the three children, in the former part of that book, tell the king, that even though it were not the pleasure of God to deliver them from the fiery furnace, yet "would they not serve his gods§;" on what other principle could they so rationally, or did they so probably say this, as on that, which the brethren in the book of Maccabees explicitly profess? There, one of them, stretching forth his hands to the torment, saith, "These I had from Heaven: and for his laws I despise them; and from him I hope to receive them again." Another, "It is good being put to death by men, to look for hope from God, to be raised up again by him." And lastly, the mother declares to her children: "I neither gave you birth, nor life; nor was it I, that formed your members: but doubtless the Creator of the world, who formed the generation of man, and found out the beginning of all things, will also of his mercy give you breath and life again; as you now regard not yourselves for his laws sake||." In the later times indeed of the Jewish church, not a few denied this doctrine: but much the greater number held it: allowing, as St Paul acquainted Felix, "that there shall be a resurrection, both of the just and unjust¶."

Yet still, the full confirmation of it was reserved for our Saviour to give: who, having in his life-time raised up three several persons, as you may read at large in the Evangelists, raised

* So I think the original should be translated. † Job xix. 25, 26.

‡ Dan. xii. 2. § Dan. iii. 17, 18. || 2 Mac. vii. 10, — 23. ¶ Acts xxiv. 15.

raised up himself from the dead, in the last place; to afford us the strongest demonstration possible, that he both can and will raise us all at the day of judgment.

This great event will doubtless, when it comes to pass, exhibit to the whole universe an astonishing evidence of the power and the truth of God: who may easily have many reasons for restoring our bodies, which we apprehend not; besides those, which in some measure we do apprehend: that the soul of man being originally, and in the state of innocence, united to a body, is probably capable of completer perception and action, and consequently of higher degrees of reward or punishment, in that state, than a separate one, or at least will be so, with such a body, as in the next life shall be allotted to it: and likewise, that our belief of enjoying happiness, or suffering misery, in both parts of our frame hereafter, must naturally incline us to preserve the purity of both here: abstaining, or “cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God*.”

The truth and reasonableness of the doctrine being thus established; it ought to be no objection, that several particulars relating to it exceed our comprehension. “How the dead are raised,” it is sufficient that God knows; and by no means wonderful that we do not: for we scarce know, how any one part of the course of nature is carried on. And as to the inquiry, that follows this in St Paul, “With what bodies do they come†?” we are taught, they shall be so far the same bodies, that every one shall have properly his own, and be truly the same person he was before: but so far different, that those of good persons will be subject to none of the sufferings, none of the infirmities, none of the necessities of this life. For, to use the same Apostle’s words, “What is sown in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption: what is sown in dishonour, shall be raised in glory: what is sown a natural body, shall be raised a spiritual body‡.” But the particular nature of spiritual bodies, or the distinction that shall be made in them, between the more eminent in goodness and their inferiors, “as one star differeth from another star in glory§;” the sethings we are not qualified, in our present state, to understand. And it is some degree of weakness even to ask questions about them; but

* 2 Cor. vii. 1. † 1 Cor. xv. 35. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 42,—44. § Ibid. 41.

but would be much greater to attempt giving answers. I shall therefore only add, that such of the good, as *are found alive at the coming of the Lord**, shall not sleep, or die, and therefore cannot rise again; but *shall be changed†* into the same likeness with those who do: as the scripture hath plainly taught us. But what the appearance and condition of the bodies of wicked persons will be at the resurrection, it hath not, I think afforded us the least knowledge, further than is implied in the description of their punishment, of which I shall treat before I conclude: and let us be so wise, as to dread the terrors, that are thus concealed from us.

Concerning the general judgment, which is to come immediately after the resurrection, I have spoken under the article of the Creed which relates to it: and therefore proceed now to the consequences of that judgment, by showing you,

III. That both the souls and bodies of the pious and virtuous will enjoy *everlasting life*: that is, in their case, happiness. For a happy life being the only one, that is a blessing: life in scripture, very commonly signifies felicity; and death, misery.

Now, that good persons will, sooner or later, be recompensed by a good God, is an undoubted truth. But then as no one is perfectly good, and many have been very bad: there is room for much doubt, who hath a right to apply this comfort to himself, and who not. But what reason might be at a loss to determine, the scripture hath cleared up; and intitled all to pardon and reward, who truly repent of their sins; and sincerely, though not without mixtures of human frailty, obey God, from a principle of faith in Christ, and in reliance on the grace of the Holy Ghost. Still, after this, reason unassisted can only guess, of what nature, of what degree, of what duration, this reward will be. And here once more revelation interposes, and most happily enlightens us. "For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit ‡." Not that any exact account is given us of the particulars, that shall make up our future bliss: for in all probability we are

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not

* 1 Thess. iv. 15.

† 1 Cor. xv. 51.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

not capable of receiving such a one : our present faculties are not fitted for it.

But however, in general, our Saviour tells us, we shall be “ as the angels of God in heaven *.” Nay, his beloved disciple St John tells us, that, though “ it doth not yet appear what we shall be, this we know, that when God shall appear we shall be like him †.” Now to be like God implies, in few words, every thing desirable, that ever so many words can express. Further yet, a voice from heaven proclaims, in the Revelation, that we shall be free in that state, from every thing that is uneasy: for “ God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ‡.” And multitudes of scriptures assure us, that we shall enjoy every thing, that is delightful: for they use the noblest and strongest images, of all that in this world is great and splendid, and capable of giving the most exalted and most refined satisfactions, to represent that happiness figuratively, which cannot be literally described.

Our vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto the glorious body § of our blessed Lord: which, in his temporary transfiguration here on earth, shone as the sun; and his raiment was white as the light ||. They shall be freed from all tendency to decay or disorder; and become unwearied instruments for every excellent purpose, to that better part, which they used to *press down ¶*. They shall, doubtless, also have such gratifications allotted to them, as will suit, though not their present gross nature, yet their future spiritual condition: and be adorned with all the dignity and beauty, that ought naturally to accompany absolute innocence, universal love, divine favour, and heavenly joy.

Then for our minds, when once *the spirits of just men* are *made perfect **, as they shall be, in every thing worthy and amiable: what pleasure must we take in meeting again the dear objects of our former affections, now become infinitely more deserving of them; in conversing with all the great and good persons that ever were, concerning the various scenes of this present world, and the blessed exchange that we have made of it

* Mat. xxii. 30. † 1 John iii. 2. ‡ Rev. xxi. 4. § Phil. iii. 21.

|| Mat. xvii. 2. ¶ Wis. ix. 15. * Heb. xii. 23.

it for better : in learning from them, and that *innumerable company of angels* *, which minister to God's will, continually new instruction, concerning all his works of nature, providence and grace ! What surprising advances must we make by these means in most pleasing knowledge : what rapturous engagements in mutual friendship ! Nor can it be questioned, but such employments too, however beyond our reach to guess at them now, will be assigned to each person, as shall produce him high honour, and equal happiness. But above all, happiness will be that of incessantly seeing and loving God, and feeling that we are beloved by him. Thus *shall we be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his house, and made to drink of the river of his pleasures ; for with him is the fountain of life* †, *in his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore* ‡. Were we to have a prospect, that our felicity would end ; the more exquisite our enjoyments were, the more melancholy our reflections might be. But in the word of God we find repeated assurances, that *the righteous shall go into life eternal* § ; that *the inheritance reserved in heaven for us, is incorruptible, and fadeth not away* ||. Nay, indeed, as there will always be room for finite creatures, to advance without end towards him, who is infinite ; and as every improvement in perfection must be of itself a fresh delight, and will certainly be rewarded by our Maker with fresh bounties, we have reason to conclude, that our happiness, far from ever ending, will be continually increasing to all eternity.

It is true, the greatest, the ablest, the best of us merit no such blessedness : far from it. But still, what *God only wise* ¶ hath not thought too much to promise, the meanest and most ignorant may humbly expect. They are as capable as others of love and duty to him, good-will to their fellow-creatures, and moral government of themselves. Now, these are the things which he values ; the true seeds of future bliss : and whoever cultivates them faithfully, will be sure to reap their fruit, each in proportion to his improvement. And thus every one shall be happy to the height of his capacity : neither despising those below him, nor envying those above him. But, though we ought to dwell upon this most delightful and use-

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* Heb. xii. 22. † Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9. ‡ Psal. xvi. 11.

§ Mat. xxv. 46. Rom. ii. 7. || 1 Pet. i. 4. ¶ Rom. xvi. 27.

1 Tim. i. 17. Jude, verse 25.

ful subject, in our thoughts, much more than we do, we must now turn our eyes from it to a very different view, set before us.

IV. That the souls and bodies of the wicked shall undergo everlasting punishment.

This, it must be owned, is not explicitly mentioned in the Creed. And God had rather, that we should be moved to obey him by love, and hope of his favour, than by fear of his anger. But both motives are implied in this article. For though life in scripture more especially means happiness; yet its original sense is only continuance in being, whether happy or miserable: and as the wicked are raised, and judged in order to suffer what they have deserved, so must they live afterwards for the same purpose.

That disobedience to God can never end well, is the plainest truth in the world: for nothing is hid from his knowledge, nothing can escape his power: he is holy as well as good; besides that goodness itself requires, the incorrigible bad to be made examples, for the sake of deterring others. Yet lest, after all, they should promise themselves that he will spare them, he hath solemnly and repeatedly declared, that he will not. In this world however, many such come off, to all appearance, with impunity; committing much evil, and enjoying much good. And they who are punished, are often but slightly punished; and seldom according to the degree of their crimes: for the deliberate and artful sinners, who are the worst, usually fare best here below. As sure therefore as God is just and true, another state remains, in which all this will be set right.

What sufferings, in particular, the Divine justice will then inflict on unpardoned sinners, reason cannot determine: and revelation hath given us only general and figurative descriptions of them; but such descriptions, as are beyond all things terrible: and I shall lay them before you, not in my own words, but those of holy writ. The Judge of all shall say unto them, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels* *. There they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out, without mixture, into the cup of his indignation, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and e-

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* Matth. xxv. 14.

*ver, and they have no rest, day nor night *: their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched †.*

How severe soever these denunciations may appear to us, assuredly the threatenings of God will not be vain terrors. We are partial and incompetent judges in our own case: prone to flatter and deceive ourselves. But he knows exactly what sin deserves, and what the honour of his government requires: from his declarations therefore we are to learn our fate. *He hath set before us life and death: and whether we like, shall be given us ‡.* If therefore the latter be our wilful choice, in which we obstinately persist; what wonder if we are left to it? For sin and misery must and will be companions for ever. Not that in any case, the anger of God shall prevail over his justice: but the degree of each person's condemnation shall be so exactly proportioned to that of his guilt, that when the eyes of sinners, which here they endeavour to shut, are opened, as they shall be hereafter, to see what their deeds have merited: *every mouth shall be stopped §, and all flesh be silent before the Lord ||.* For every circumstance that can either aggravate or excuse, will be impartially weighed; and *some be accordingly beaten with many stripes, and some with few ¶.* But what the lowest degree of the Almighty's final vengeance may amount to, God forbid we should any of us try: for whoever sins, purposely or carelessly, in hopes of a small punishment, will for that very reason deserve a heavy one.

Let us all therefore make the use that we ought, both of the terrors and the mercies of the Lord: awing ourselves by the former from transgressing our duty, and encouraging ourselves by the latter to the utmost diligence in performing it: that so we may pass through life with comfort, meet death with cheerfulness; and having faithfully served God in this world, be eternally and abundantly rewarded by him in the next.

* Rev. xiv. 10, 11. † Isa. lxvi. 24. Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.

‡ Ecclus. xv. 17. § Rom. iii. 19. || Zech. ii. 15. ¶ Luke xii. 47, 48.

LECTURE XVIII.

FIRST COMMANDMENT.

THE whole duty of man consists in three points: Renouncing what God hath forbidden us, believing what he hath taught us, and doing what he hath required of us: which accordingly are the things promised in our name at our baptism. The two former I have already explained to you. And therefore I proceed at present to the third.

Now the things which God requires to be done are of two sorts: either such as have been always the duty of all men; or such as are peculiarly the duty of Christians. And our catechism very properly treats of the former sort first, comprehending them under those Ten Commandments, which were delivered by the Creator of the world, on Mount Sinai, in a most awful manner, as you may read in the 19th and 20th chapters of Exodus. For though indeed they were then given to the Jews particularly, yet the things contained in them are such, as all mankind from the beginning were bound to observe*. And therefore, even under the Mosaic dispensation, they, and the tables on which they were engraven, and the ark in which they were put, were distinguished from the rest of God's ordinances by a peculiar regard, as containing the Covenant of the Lord†. And though the Mosaic dispensation be now at an end, yet concerning these moral precepts of it our Saviour declares, that *one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled*‡. Accordingly, we find both him and his apostles, quoting these ten commandments, as matter of perpetual obligation to Christians: who are now, as the Jews were formerly, *the Israel of God*§.

Indeed the whole New Testament, and especially the sermon of our blessed Lord on the mount, instructs us to carry
their

* Decem sermones illi in tabulis nihil novum docent, sed quod oblitteratum fuerat admonent. Novatian. de lib. Judaicis, c. 3.

† Exod. xxxiv. 28. Deut. iv. 13. ix. 9. 11, 15. Josh. iii. 11. 1 Kin. viii. 9, 21. 2 Chron. v. 10. vi. 11. ‡ Mat. v. 18. § Gal. vi. 16.

their obligation farther, that is, to more points, than either the Jews, a people of gross understanding and carnal dispositions, commonly took into consideration; or their prophets were commissioned distinctly to represent to them; the wisdom of God foreseeing, that it would only increase their guilt: and further indeed, than the words of the commandments, if taken strictly, express. But the reason is, that being visibly intended for a summary of human duty, they both may, and must be understood, by those who are capable of penetrating into the depth of their meaning, to imply more than they express. And therefore, to comprehend their full extent, it will be requisite to observe the following rules. Where any sin is forbidden in them, the opposite duty is implicitly enjoined: and where any duty is enjoined, the opposite sin is implicitly forbidden. Where the highest degree of any thing evil is prohibited; whatever is faulty in the same kind, tho' in a lower degree, is by consequence so prohibited. And where one instance of virtuous behaviour is commanded, every other, that hath the same nature, and same reason for it, is understood to be commanded too. What we are expected to abstain from, we are expected to avoid, as far as we can, all temptations to it, and occasions of it: and what we are expected to practise, we are expected to use all fit means, that may better enable us to practise it. All that we are bound to do ourselves, we are bound, on fitting occasions, to exhort and assist others to do, when it belongs to them: and all that we are bound not to do, we are to tempt nobody else to do, but keep them back from it, as much as we have opportunity. The ten commandments, excepting two that required enlargement, are delivered in few words: which brief manner of speaking hath great Majesty in it. But explaining them according to these rules; which are natural and rational in themselves, favoured by ancient Jewish writers *, authorized by our blessed Saviour, and certainly designed by the makers of the catechism to be used in expounding it: we shall find, that there is no part of the moral law, but may be fitly ranked under them: as will appear by what shall be said, in speaking separately on each commandment.

Before

* Χρη δε μηδ' εκεινο αγνοειν, οτι οι ι λογι κεφαλαια νομωσις, των εν ειδει παρ' ελην την νομιθεσιαν εν ταις ιεραϊς βιβλοις αναγραφενταν. Philo de Decal. The ten commandments are אמור התורה ושרשיה. Cozri, page 44. See also there, p. 107.

Before them all, is placed a general preface: expressing, first, the authority of him who gave them; "I am the Lord thy God:" Secondly, His goodness to those whom he enjoined to observe them; "who brought thee out of the land of Egypt; out of the house of bondage." Now the authority of God over us Christians, is as great, as it could be over the Jews. And his goodness is much greater, in freeing us from the bondage of sin, and opening to us the heavenly land of promise, than it was in leading them, from Egyptian slavery, to the earthly Canaan: though indeed this deliverance, having made so fresh and so strong an impression on them, was the fittest to be mentioned at that time.

The ten commandments being originally written by the finger of God himself, on two tables of stone; and consisting of two parts, our duty to our Maker, and to our fellow-creatures; which we can never perform as we ought, if we neglect that we owe to ourselves; the four first are usually called duties of the first table; the six last, of the second. And our Saviour, in effect, divides them accordingly, when he reduces them to these: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart; and thy neighbour, as thyself*."

The first Commandment is, "Thou shalt have none other gods, but me."

The same reasons, which prove, that God is, prove that there is but one God. The imagination of two or more beings, each perfect and each infinite, is at first sight groundless. For one such Being is sufficient to produce and govern every thing else: and therefore more than one can never be proved by reason: and yet, if there were more, all men would surely have had some way of knowing it: and till we have, we are not to believe it. Indeed we have strong reasons to believe the contrary. For if there is no difference between these several supposed Beings, they are but one and the same. And if there is any difference, one must be less perfect than the other, and therefore imperfect, and therefore not God. Besides, as the whole course of nature appears to proceed uniformly under one direction; there is, without question, only one director; not several, thwarting each other.

And what reason teaches in this matter, scripture every
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* Matth. xxii. 37, 39.

where confirms; forbidding us to worship, or believe in any other deity, than the one Maker and Ruler of heaven and earth; who hath manifested himself to all men by the works of his hands; to the Patriarchs and Jews, by the revelations recorded in Moses and the Prophets; and finally to Christians, by his Son our Lord: who, in a way and manner to us inconceivable, is one with the Father; and the Holy Spirit with both: as I have already shown you, in discoursing on the Creed.

There being then this one only God; the commandment before us enjoins,

I. That we have him for our God:

II. That we have no other.

I. That we have him: that is, think so of him, and behave so to him, as his infinite perfection, and our absolute dependence on him, require: which general duty towards God, our catechism very justly branches out into the following particulars:

First, That *we believe in him*. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is*. The foundation on which this belief stands, I have shown in its proper place. And the great thing, in which it consists, is, that we fix firmly in our minds, recall frequently to our memories, and imprint deeply upon our hearts, an awful persuasion of the being and presence, the power and justice; the holiness and truth, of this great Lord of all. The consequence of this will be,

Secondly, That *we fear him*. For such attributes as these, duly considered, must fill the most innocent creatures with reverence and self-abasement. But sinful and guilty ones, as we know ourselves to have been, have cause to feel yet stronger emotions in their souls from such a meditation: Apprehensions of his displeasure, and solicitude for his pardon; leading us naturally to that penitent care of our hearts and lives, on which he hath graciously assured us, that thro' faith in Christ Jesus, we shall be forgiven. And then, gratitude for his mercy will prompt us to the

Third duty towards him, which our catechism specifies, that *we love him: the fear of the Lord* being, as the son of Sirach declares, *the beginning of his love*†. For whenever we come to re-

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* Heb. xi. 6.

† Ecclus. xxv. 12.

fect seriously on that goodness, which hath given us all the comforts that we enjoy; that pity which offers pardon, on most equitable terms, for all the faults that we have committed; that grace, which enables us to perform every duty acceptably; and that infinite bounty, which rewards our imperfect performances with eternal happiness: we cannot but feel ourselves bound to love such a Benefactor, *with all our heart, and with all our mind, with all our soul, and all our strength*; to rejoice in being under his government; *make our boast of him all the day long**; and chuse him for *our portion for ever*†. A mind thus affected, would be uneasy, without paying the regard set down in the

Fourth place, Which is, *to worship him*: to acknowledge our dependence, and pay our homage to him; both in private, to preserve and improve a sense of religion in ourselves; and in public, to support and spread it in the world. The first part of worship, mentioned in the catechism, and the first in a natural order of things, is *giving him thanks*. God originally made and fitted all his creatures for happiness: if any of them have made themselves miserable, this doth not lessen their obligation of thankfulness to him: but his continuing still good, and abounding in forgiveness and liberality, increases that obligation unspeakably. With a grateful sense of his past favours is closely connected, *putting our trust in him* for the time to come. And justly doth the catechism require it to be our *whole trust*. For his power and goodness are infinite: those of every creature may fail us; and all that they can possibly do for us, proceeds ultimately from him. Now, a principal expression of reliance on God is, petitioning for his help. For if we *pray in faith*‡, we shall live so too. And therefore trusting in him, which might have been made a separate head, is included in this of worship; and put between the first part of it, *giving thanks to him*; and the second, *calling upon him*: according to that of the Psalmist; “O Lord, in thee have I trusted: let me never be confounded §.” To call upon God, is to place ourselves in his presence; and there to beg of him, for ourselves, and each other, with unfeigned humility and submission, such assistance in our duty, such provision for our wants,

* Psal. xlv. 2, 9.

† Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26.

‡ Jam. i. 6. v. 15.

§ Psal. xxxi. 1.

wants, and such defence against our enemies, of every kind, as infinite wisdom sees fit for us all. After this evident obligation, follows a

Fifth not less so : *to honour his holy name and word* : not presuming even to speak of the great God in a negligent way ; but preserving, in every expression and action, that reverence to him, which is due : paying, not a superstitious, but a decent and respectful regard, to whatever bears any peculiar relation to him ; his day, his church, his ministers, but especially honouring his holy word, the law of our lives and the foundation of our hopes, by a diligent study and firm belief of what it teaches ; and that universal obedience to what it commands, which our catechism reserves for the

Sixth and last, as it is undoubtedly the greatest, thing : *to serve him truly all the days of our life*. Obedience is the end of faith and fear ; the proof of love ; the foundation of trust ; the necessary qualification, to make worship and honour of every kind acceptable. This therefore must complete the whole, that we “ walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless *,” not thinking any one so difficult, as to despair of it : or so small, as to despise it ; and never be “ weary in well-doing : for we shall reap in due season, if we faint not † :” and he alone “ shall be saved, that endureth to the end ‡.” But we must now proceed to observe,

II. That, as this commandment requires us to acknowledge the one true God ; so it forbids us to acknowledge any other.

Both before, and long after the law of Moses was given, the generality of the world entertained a belief, that there were many gods ; a great number of beings, superior to men, that amongst them governed the world, and were fit objects of devotion. To these, as their own fancy, or the folly or fraud of others led them, they ascribed more or less both of power and goodness ; attributed to several of them the vilest actions, that could be ; supposed them to preside, some over one nation or city, some over another ; worshipped a few or a multitude of them, just as they pleased ; and that with a strange variety of ceremonies, absurd and impious, immoral and barbarous. Amidst this crowd of imaginary deities, the real one

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* Luke i. 6. † Gal. vi. 9. ‡ Mat. xxiv. 13.

was almost entirely forgotten: false religion and irreligion divided the world between them; and wickedness of every kind was authorized by both. The cure for these dreadful evils must plainly be, restoring the old true notion of one only God, ruling the world himself; which therefore was the first great article of the Jewish faith, as it is of ours.

Christians can hardly in words profess a plurality of gods: but in reality they do, if they suppose the divine nature common to more than one Being; or think our Saviour, or the Holy Spirit, mere creatures, and yet pay them divine honours. But besides these, we apprehend the Church of Rome to sin against the present commandment, when they pray to angels, to the holy virgin and the saints, as being able every where to hear them; and having not only temporal relief, but grace and salvation, in their power to bestow. Nay, were the plea which they sometimes make a true one; that they only pray to them to intercede with God; yet it would be an insufficient one. For there is no reason to believe, that they have any knowledge of such prayers: or if they had, as "there is one God," so there is "one Mediator between God and man *." And we have neither precept, nor allowance, nor example, in the whole Bible, of applying to any other, amongst all the absent inhabitants of the invisible world.

But there are several ways more of transgressing this commandment. If we ascribe things, which befall us, to fate, or to chance, or to nature; and mean any thing real by these words, different from that order, which our Maker's providence hath appointed; we set up in effect other gods besides him. If we imagine the influence of stars, the power of spirits, in short, any power whatever, to be independent on him, and capable of doing the least matter, more than he judges proper to permit that it should; this also is having more gods than one. If we set up ourselves, or others above him; and obey, or expect any one else to obey, man rather than God; here again is in practice, though not in speculation, the same crime. If we love or "trust in uncertain riches," more than "the living God †;" this is that "covetousness which is idolatry ‡." If we pursue unlawful sensual pleasures, instead of delight-

* 1 Tim. ii. 5.

† 1 Tim. vi. 17.

‡ Col. iii. 5.

delighting in his precepts; this is making a “god of our own belly *.” In a word, if we allow ourselves to practise any wickedness whatever, we serve, by so doing, the false “god of this world†,” instead of the true God of heaven, besides whom we ought not to have any other: and therefore to whom alone be, as is most due, all honour and obedience, now and for ever. Amen.

* Phil. iii. 19.

† 2 Cor. iv. 4.

LECTURE XIX.

SECOND COMMANDMENT.

WE are now come to the Second Commandment: which the Church of Rome would persuade men is only part of the first. But they plainly relate to different things. The first appoints, that the object of our worship be only the true God: the next, that we worship him not under any visible resemblance or form. And besides, if we join these two into one, there will be no tenth left; though the scripture itself hath called them ten*: to avoid which absurdity, the Romanists have committed another, by dividing the tenth into two. And they might as well have divided it into six or seven; as I shall show you, in discoursing upon it. For these reasons, the oldest and most considerable, both of the Jewish and Christian writers, who distinguish the commandments by their number, distinguish them in the same manner that we do. Perhaps it may seem of small consequence, how that before us is counted, provided it be not omitted, And we must own, that some persons before the rise of popery, and some Protestants since the Reformation, have, without any ill design, reckoned it as the Papists do. But what both the former have done by mere

* Exod. xxxiv. 28. Deut. iv. 13. x. 4.

mere mistake, these last endeavour to defend out of policy: well knowing, that when once they have got the second to be considered as only a part of the first, they can much more easily pass it over, as a part of no great separate meaning or importance, than if it were thought a distinct precept. And accordingly, in some of their small books of devotion, they pass it over, and leave it out entirely*. But it deserves, as I shall now show you, another sort of regard.

The Prophet Isaiah very justly puts the question: *To whom will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto him†?* He is an invisible Spirit: therefore representing him in a visible shape, is representing him to be such as he is not. He is every where present: therefore a figure, confined by its nature to a particular place, must incline persons to a wrong conception of him. He is the living, wise, and powerful Governor of the world: therefore to express him by a dead lump of matter must be doing him dishonour. We are unable indeed, at best, to speak or think worthily of him: and we cannot well avoid using some of the same phrases, concerning him and his actions, which we do concerning the parts and motions of our own bodies. But we can very well avoid making visible images of him: and the plainest reason teaches, that we ought to avoid it; because they lower and debase mens notions of God: lead the weaker sort into superstitious and foolish apprehensions and practices: and provoke those of better abilities, from a contempt of such childish representations, to disregard and ridicule the religion into which they are adopted.

Therefore, in the early ages of the world, many of the heathens themselves had no images of the deity. Particularly, the ancient Persians had none‡. Nor had the first Romans; Numa, their second king, having, as the philosopher Plutarch, himself a Roman magistrate, though a Greek by birth, tells us, *forbidden them to represent God in the form, either of a man or any other animal.* “And accordingly, he saith, they had neither

* This they do in the Latin Office of the Virgin, and in some of their English devotional books. Indeed there they omit likewise all but the first sentence of our fourth commandment, and the promise in our fifth: perhaps to palliate their preceding omission.

† Isa. xl. 18.

‡ Herodot. l. i. § 131.

ther any painted nor engraved figure of him for 170 years ; but temples, void of any image of any shape ; thinking it impious to liken a superior nature to inferior ones ; and impossible to attain the notion of God otherwise than by the understanding *." And Varro, one of the most learned of their own authors, after acknowledging, that " during more than 170 years they worshipped the gods without any visible representation," added, that " had they never had any, their religion had been the purer : for which opinion, amongst other evidences, he brought that of the Jewish people ; and scrupled not to say in conclusion, that they who first set up images of the gods in the several nations, lessened the reverence of their countrymen towards them, and introduced error concerning them †." So much wiser were these heathen Romans in this point, than the Christian Romans are now.

But when some of the eastern kingdoms had fallen into this corruption ; particularly the Egyptians, who claimed the invention as an honour ‡, the great care of God was to preserve or free his own people from it. The words of this commandment express that purpose very strongly : and very clearly forbid not only making and worshipping representations of false gods, but any representation of God at all. And to show yet more fully, that even those of the true God are prohibited by it, Moses, in Deuteronomy, immediately after mentioning the delivery of the ten commandments, adds with respect to the second, " Take therefore good heed unto yourselves ; for ye saw no manner of similitude, on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire : lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you the similitude of any figure §." And when the Israelites made a golden calf in the wilderness, though evidently their design was to represent by it not a false object of worship, but *the Lord* (in the original it is *Jehovah*) who brought them out of the land of Egypt ; yet they were charged

* Plut. in Num. p. 65. Ed. Par. 1624.

† Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 4. c. 31. Dionysius Halicarnassensis indeed saith, l. 2. c. 15. p. 87. that Romulus erected images. But as he mentions them no otherwise than incidentally, amongst the provisions made by that prince for divine worship, his assertion is not so much to be regarded, as the two contrary more formal ones. Or we may suppose, that Numa took them down. ‡ Herodot. l. 2. § 4. § Deut. iv. 12,—15, 16.

charged with it, and punished for it, as a breach of their covenant with God: and Moses accordingly broke, on that occasion, the two tables of the commandments, which were, on their part, the conditions of that covenant*. Again, in after-times, when the kings of Israel set up the same representation of the same true God at Dan and Bethel; the scripture constantly speaks of it, as the leading sin, from which all the rest of their idolatries, and at last their utter destruction proceeded. For, from worshipping the true God by an image, they soon came to worship the images of false gods too; and from thence fell into all sorts of superstition, and all sorts of wickedness.

* Yet the church of Rome will have it, that we may now very lawfully and commendably practise what the Jews were forbidden. But observe: Not only the Jews, but the heathens also, who never were subject to the law of Moses, are condemned in scripture for this mode of worship. For St Paul's accusation against them is, that "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God; but became vain in their imaginations; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, made like to corruptible man†." And in another place he argues with the Athenians thus: "Forasmuch as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men every where to repent‡."

Where then is, or can be, the allowance of that image worship in the Bible, for which multitudes of the Romish communion are as earnest as if it was commanded there? Nor is antiquity more favourable to it than scripture. For the primitive Christians abhorred the very mention of images: holding even the trade of making them to be utterly unlawful. And indeed pretending to frame a likeness of God the Father Almighty, "whom no man ever hath seen, or can see§," as some of that church have done, without any censure from the rulers of it, liberal as they are of censures on other occasions, is both a palpable and a heinous breach of this commandment. For, though we find in the Old Testament, that an angel hath
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* Exod. xxxii. † Rom. i. 21, 23. ‡ Acts xvii. 29, 30. § 1 Tim. vi. 16.

sometimes appeared, representing his person, as an Ambassador doth that of his prince; and though, in a vision of *the Ancient of days*, *his garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool* *; yet these things gave the Jews no right then, and therefore can give us none now, to make other, or even the like representations of him, contrary to his express order.

Our blessed Saviour indeed existed in a human form. But we have not the least knowledge of any one part or feature of his person. And therefore all attempts of exhibiting a likeness of him are utterly vain. Besides, he hath appointed a very different memorial of himself, the sacrament of his body and blood: and we ought to think that a sufficient one. These others can serve no good purpose, but what, by due meditation, may be attained as well without them. And there is great and evident danger of evil in them, from that unhappy proneness of mankind to fix their thoughts and affections on sensible objects, instead of raising them higher; which if any one doth not feel in himself, he must however see in others. But particularly in this case, long experience hath given sad proof, that from setting up images of our gracious Redeemer, the holy virgin, and other saints, to remind persons of them and their virtues, the world hath run on to pay such imprudent and extravagant honours to the figures themselves, as by degrees have arisen to the grossest idolatry.

Indeed some of the popish writers tell us, that they do not worship their images. Yet others of them, who have never been condemned for it, say quite the contrary, that they do worship them; and with the very same degree of worship, which they pay to the persons represented by them. Nay, their public authorised books of prayers and ceremonies not only appoint the crucifix to be adored, but in form declare, that divine adoration is due to it. And accordingly they petition it, in so many words, expressly directed to the very wood, as *their only hope, to increase the joy and grace of the godly, and blot out the sins of the wicked* †.

But let us suppose them to pay only an inferior honour to images, and to worship the Holy Trinity, and the saints by

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* Daniel vii. 9.

† See Dr Hickes's collection of controversial discourses, vol. i. p. 47.

them. Having no ground, or permission to pray at all to saints departed, they certainly have none to use images for enlivening their prayers. If any words can forbid the worship of God, his Son and Spirit by images, this commandment forbids it. And if any excuses or distinctions will acquit the papists of transgressing it, the same will acquit the ancient Jews and heathens also. For if many of the former mean only, that their adoration should pass through the image, as it were, to the person, for whom it was made; so did many of the Pagans plead, that their meaning was just the same*: yet the scripture accuses them all of idolatry. And if great numbers of the Pagans did absolutely pray to the image itself; so do great numbers of the Papists too: and some of their own writers honestly confess and lament it.

But further: Had they little or no regard, as they sometimes pretend, to the image; but only to the person represented by it: why is an image, of the blessed virgin suppose, in one place, so much more frequented, than another in a different place, and the prayers made before it thought to have so much more efficacy?

Upon the whole, therefore, they plainly appear to be guilty of that image worship, which reason and scripture condemn. Nor do they so much as alledge either any command or express allowance for it. And yet they have pronounced a curse upon all who reject it.

But let us go on, from the prohibition, to the reasons given for it in the commandment. The first is a very general, but very awful one. *For the Lord thy God is a jealous God*: not jealous for himself, lest he should suffer for the follies of his creatures: that cannot be: but jealous for us, for his Spouse the church; lest our notions of his nature and attributes, and consequently of the duties which we owe to him, being depraved, and our minds darkened with superstitious persuasions, and fears, and hopes, we should depart from the fidelity which we have vowed to him, and fall into those grievous immoralities, which St Paul, in the beginning of his epistle to the Romans,

* See a remarkable proof of this produced in an epistle to Mr Warburton, concerning the conformity of Rome, Pagan and Papal: printed for Roberts, 1748, 8vo. p. 21.

mans, describes as the consequences of idolatry*, and which have been its consequences in all times and places.

The second reason for this prohibition is more particular : that God will *visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him*. For, observe, worshipping him irrationally, or in a manner which he hath forbidden, he interprets to be hating him : as it must proceed, wholly or in part, from a dishonourable opinion of him, and tend to spread the like opinion amongst others. Now we are not to understand by this threatening, that God will ever, on account of the sins of parents, punish children, in the strict sense of the word, *punish*, when they deserve it not †. But in the course of things, established by his providence, it comes to pass, that the sins of one person, or one generation, lead those who come after, into the same, or other, perhaps greater sins ; and so bring upon them double sufferings, partly the fruits of their predecessors faults, partly of their own. And when successive ages follow one another in crimes, besides the natural bad effects of them, which punish them in some measure, God may justly threaten severer additional corrections, than he would else inflict for their personal transgressions ‡ : both because it may deter men from propagating wickedness down to their posterity ; and because if it doth not, inveterate evils demand a rougher cure. Accordingly here the Israelites are forewarned, that if they fell into idolatry, they and their children would fall, by means of it, into all sorts of abominations : and not only, these would of course produce many mischiefs to both, but God would chastise the following generations with heavier strokes, for not taking warning, as they ought to have done, by the misbehaviour and sufferings of the former. Denouncing this intention beforehand must influence them, if any thing could : because it must give them a concern, both for themselves, and their descendants too ; for whom, next to themselves, if not equally, men are always interested. And therefore visiting sins upon them to the third and fourth generation seems to be mentioned ; because either the life, or however

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* Rom. i. 21,—32. † Against this wrong imagination, Cotta in Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 3. § 38. inveighs vehemently.

‡ See Sherlock on providence, p. 382,—390.

the sollicitude, of a person may be supposed to extend thus far, and seldom further.

This threatening therefore was not only just, but wise and kind, on the supposition, which in general it was reasonable to make, that in such matters children would imitate their wicked progenitors. And whenever any did not; either their innocence would avert the impending evils; or they would be abundantly rewarded in a future life for what the sins of others had brought upon them in the present.

But if God hath threatened to punish the breach of this precept *to the third and fourth generation*, he hath promised to *show mercy unto thousands*, that is, so long as the world shall endure, *to them that love him and keep his commandments*. To the Jews he fulfilled this engagement, as far as they gave him opportunity, by temporal blessings. And amongst Christians there is ordinarily a fair prospect, that a nation, or a family, pious and virtuous through successive ages, will be recompensed with increasing happiness in every age: which is a powerful motive, both for worshipping God in purity ourselves, and educating those, who are placed under our care, to do so too. Yet it must be acknowledged, that neither the rewards foretold, nor the punishments denounced, in this commandment, are so constantly distributed on earth under the gospel dispensation, as they were under that of the law. But still our Maker as certainly requires, as ever he did, since he *is a Spirit, to be worshipped in spirit and in truth**: and the inducement to it is abundantly sufficient, that the *idolaters*, amongst other sinners, *shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone*†. Not that we are to be forward in applying so dreadful a sentence to the case of those, whether Christians or others, who, in this or any respect, offend through such ignorance or mistake, as, for aught we can tell, is excusable. May our heavenly Father forgive them: *for they know not what they do*‡. But we should be very thankful to him for the light, which he hath caused to shine upon us; and very careful to *walk in it as becomes the children of light, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*§.

* John iv. 24. † Rev. xxi. 8. ‡ Luke xxiii. 34. § Eph. v. 8, 11.

LECTURE XX.

THIRD COMMANDMENT.

THE first commandment having provided that we should worship only the one true God; and the second prohibited worshipping him in a manner so unworthy and dangerous, as by images; the third proceeds to direct, that we preserve a due reverence to him in our whole conversation and behaviour. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.* Under these words are forbidden several things which differ in their degrees of guilt.

1. The first, and highest offence is, when we swear by the name of God falsely. For vanity in scripture frequently means something which is not what it would appear. And hence using God's name *in vain*, or to vanity, principally signifies, applying it to confirm a falsehood. Doing this deliberately, is one of the most shocking crimes of which we can be guilty. For taking an oath is declaring solemnly, that we know ourselves to be in the presence of God, and him to be witness of what we speak: it is appealing to him, that our words express the very truth of our hearts; and renouncing all title to his mercy, if they do not. This it is to swear: and think then what it must be, to swear falsely. In other sins men endeavour to forget God: but perjury is daring and braving the Almighty to his very face; bidding him take notice of the falsehood that we utter, and do his worst.

Now of this dreadful crime we are guilty, if ever we swear, that we do not know or believe, what indeed we do; or that we do know or believe, what indeed we do not: if ever, being upon our oaths, we mislead those, whom we ought to inform; and give any other than the exactest and fairest account that we can, of any matter concerning which we are examined. Again, if we promise upon oath to do a thing, without firmly designing to do it; or if we promise not to do a thing, without firmly designing to abstain from it: this also is forswearing ourselves. Nay further; provided the thing, which

which we promise be lawful, if we do not ever after take all the care, that can be reasonably expected, to make our promise good, we are guilty of perjury; and of living in it, so long as we live in that neglect. If indeed a person hath sworn to do, what he thought he could have done; and it proves afterwards, unexpectedly, that he cannot; such a one is chargeable only with mistake, or inconsiderateness at most. And if we either promise, or threaten any thing, which we cannot lawfully do: making such a promise is a sin; but keeping it would be another, perhaps a greater sin; and therefore it innocently may, and in conscience ought to be broken. But if we have promised what we may lawfully, but only cannot conveniently, perform; we are by no means on that account released from our engagement: unless either we were unqualified to promise, or were deceived into promising: or the person to whom we have engaged, voluntarily sets us at liberty; or the circumstances of the case be plainly and confessedly such, that our promise was not originally designed to bind us in them.

You see then what is perjury. And you must see, it is not only the direst and grossest affront to God; for which reason it is forbidden in the first table of the ten commandments; but the most pernicious injury to our fellow-creatures; on which account you will find it again forbidden in the second table. If persons will assert falsely upon oath; no one knows what to believe; no one's property or life is safe. And if persons will promise falsely upon oath: no one can know whom to trust; all security of government and human society, all mutual confidence in trade and commerce, in every relation and condition, is utterly at an end. With the greatest reason therefore are perjured wretches abhorred of all the world. And no interest of our own, no kindness or compassion for other persons, no turn or purpose of whatsoever sort to be served by it, can ever justify our swerving at all from truth, either in giving evidence, or entering into engagements. Nor must we think in such cases to come off with equivocations, evasions, and quibbles; and imagine it innocent to deceive this way. On the contrary, the more artful and cunning our falsehoods are, the more deliberate and mischievous, and therefore the wickeder they are. *Be not deceived; God is not mock-*
ed:

*ed**: and the following are the declarations of his sacred word to the upright man: *Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, and rest upon thy holy hill? He that speaketh the truth from his heart, and hath used no deceit with his tongue: he that sweareth unto his neighbour and disappointeth him not, though it were to his own hindrance†.* But to the perjured: *Seeing he despised the oath, by breaking the covenant; thus saith the Lord God: As I live, surely mine Oath that he hath despised, and my Covenant that he hath broken, I will recompense it upon his head ‡.*

[Let us all stand in awe of so dreadful a threatening, and avoid so horrible a guilt. Particularly at present, let all who have sworn allegiance to the King, faithfully keep it, and that in regard to the oath of God§. And let those who have not sworn, remember however, that merely claiming the protection of a government, implies some promise of being dutiful to it in return; and that a successful rebellion would not only tempt multitudes of our fellow-subjects to perjury, but lay our country, its laws and religion, at the absolute mercy of a faith-breaking church||.]

One thing more should be added here; for it cannot well be mentioned too often, that next to false swearing, false speaking and lying, whether in what we assert or what we promise, is a grievous sin, and hateful to God and man. Though we do not call on our Maker to witness, yet he is a witness of whatever we say. And it is presumptuous wickedness to utter an untruth in the presence of *the God of truth ¶*. It is also at the same time very hurtful to other persons: and very foolish with respect to ourselves. For they who will lie, to conceal their faults, or to carry their ends, are perpetually found out, disappointed and shamed, for the most part, in a very little while: and then, for ever after, they are distrusted and disbelieved, even when they speak truth: as indeed who can depend upon such, or who would venture to employ them? Many other faults may be borne, so long as honesty and sincerity last: but a failure in these cannot be passed over: so just is Solomon's observation: *The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment **.

2. Another

* Gal. vi. 7. † Psal. xv. 1, 2, 3, 5. ‡ Ezek. xvii. 18, 19.
 § Eccl. viii. 2. || This paragraph was added in the time of the Rebellion, 1745. ¶ Psal. xxxi. 5. * Prov. xii. 19.

2. Another way of *taking God's name in vain* is, when we swear by it needlessly, though it be not falsely. For this also the word *in vain* signifies.

One way of doing so, is by rash and inconsiderate vows: for a vow, being a promise made solemnly to God, partakes of the nature of an oath. And there may possibly be sometimes good reasons for entering into this kind of engagement. But vowing to do what there is no use in doing, is trifling with our Creator: making unlawful vows, is directly telling him, we will disobey him: making such without necessity, as are difficult to keep, is leading ourselves into temptation: and indeed making any, without much thought and prudent advice first, usually proves an unhappy snare. One vow we have all made, and were bound to make, that of our baptism, which includes every real good resolution. That therefore let us carefully keep, and frequently ratify; and we shall scarce have occasion to make any more.

Another very needless, and always sinful, use of God's name is, by oaths in common discourse. Too many there are, who fill up with them a great part of their most trifling conversation: especially, if ever so little warmth rises in talk, then they abound in them. Now it is unavoidable, but persons, who are perpetually swearing, must frequently perjure themselves. But were that otherwise; it is great irreverence, upon every slight thing we say, to invoke God for a witness; and mix *his holy and reverend name** with the idlest things that come out of our mouths. And what makes this practice the more inexcusable is, that we cannot have either any advantage from it, or any natural pleasure in it. Sometimes it arises from a hastiness and impatience of temper; which is but increased by giving this vent to it: whereas it is every one's wisdom, not to let it break out in any way, much less in such a way. But generally it is nothing more than a silly and profane custom, inconsiderately taken up: and there are the strongest reasons for laying it down immediately. It will make us disliked and abhorred by good persons, and scarce recommend us to the very worst. No person is the sooner believed for his frequent swearing: on the contrary, a modest serious affirmation is always much more regarded. And if any one's character

* Psalm cxi. 9.

racter is so low, that his word cannot be taken; he must think of other methods to retrieve it. For he will not at all mend matters, by adding his oath ever so often over. Then if swearing be affected, as becoming; it is certainly quite otherwise, in the highest degree. The very phrases used in it, as well as the occasions, on which they are used, are almost constantly absurd and foolish: and surely profaneness can never lessen the folly. Besides, they make the conversation of men shocking and hellish. They are acknowledged to be disrespectful to the company, in which they are used. and if regard to their earthly superiors can restrain persons from swearing; why should not the reverence, owing to our heavenly Father, do it much more effectually? But indeed the indulgence of this sin wears off by degrees all sense of religion, and of every thing that is good.

Justly therefore doth our Saviour direct: *But I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King: neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil* *. That is: avoid, not only the grosser oaths, but all the silly refinements and softening of them, which men have contrived, in hope to make them seem innocent: for, though the name of God be not expressed, yet it is implied, by mentioning something related to God, instead of himself; indeed whatever form is used to disguise it, the intent is the same; and the effect will be, bringing a sacred obligation into familiarity and contempt. Keep yourselves therefore, throughout the whole of your common conversation, within the bounds of a plain affirmation or denial: for whatever goes beyond these, proceeds from a bad turn of mind, and will produce bad consequences.

If indeed we be required to swear before a magistrate, or public officer, for the discovery of truth, and the doing of justice, this is notwithstanding lawful. For our Saviour forbids it only in our *communication*, our ordinary discourse: and he himself, our great pattern, answered upon oath to the *High Priest*, who adjured him by the living God †. Or though we be

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not

* Mat. v. 34,—36.

† Mat. xxvi. 46.

not called up by law, yet if some other weighty and extraordinary occasion should oblige us to call our Maker to witness; as St Paul hath done, in more places than one of his epistles; then also we may allowably do it, provided it be always with sincerity and reverence. For by oaths, thus taken, men are benefited; and the name of God not profaned, but honoured. But in our daily talk, and communication with each other, it is our Saviour's peremptory precept, *Swear not at all*: a rule so evidently right and important, that even heathens have strictly enjoined and followed it, to the shame of too many, who call themselves Christians.

Together with common swearing should be mentioned another sin, very near akin to it, and almost always joined with it, that monstrous custom of cursing; in direct contradiction to all humanity, and to the express words of scripture, *Bless, and curse not**. To wish the heaviest judgments of God, and even eternal damnation, to a person, for the slightest cause, or none at all; to wish the same to ourselves, if some trifling thing, that we are saying, be not true, which frequently after all is not true; amounts to the most desperate impiety, if people at all consider what they say. And though they do not, it is even then thoughtlessly treating God, and his laws, and the awful sanction of them, with contempt: and blotting out of their minds all serious regard to subjects, that will one day be found most serious things. *His delight was in cursing*, says the Psalmist, *and it shall happen unto him: he loved not blessing, therefore shall it be far from him*†.

3. Besides the offences already mentioned, all indecent and unfit use of God's name in our discourse, though it be not in swearing or cursing, comes within the prohibition of this commandment. All irreverent sayings, and even thoughts, concerning his nature and attributes, his actions and his commands, fall under the same guilt; unless we are tormented with such thoughts, whether we will or not: for then they are only an affliction, not a sin. All sorts of talk, ridiculing, misrepresenting, or inveighing against religion, or whatever is connected with it, incur the like condemnation. Nay, even want of attention in God's worship, *drawing near unto him with*

* om. xii. 14.

† Psal. cix. 16.

with our mouths, whilst we remove our hearts far from him *, if it be wilfully or carelessly indulged, makes us chargeable, in its degree, with the sin of *taking his name in vain*.

4. Though we no way profane his name ourselves; yet if we intice others to perjury and falsehood; or provoke them to rash oaths and curses; or give them any needless temptation to blaspheme God; to speak disrespectfully, or think slightly, of their Maker, or his laws, natural or revealed: by such behaviour also we become accessory to the breach of this commandment; and rank ourselves with those, whom it expressly declares *God will not hold guiltless*: that is, will not acquit, but severely punish.

Let us therefore be watchful to preserve continually such an awe of the Supreme Being upon our own minds, and those of all who belong to us, as may on every occasion effectually influence us to give him the glory due unto his name, both in our more solemn addresses to him, and in our daily words and actions. For *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints: and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him* †.

* Isa. xxix. 13.

† Psal. lxxxix.

LECTURE XXI.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

IF the worship of God were left at large to be performed at any time, too many would be tempted to defer and postpone it, on one pretence or another, till at length it would be performed at no time. And therefore, though he were to be adored only by each person separately, and in private, it would be very expedient to fix on some stated returning seasons, for that purpose. But reason shows it to be requisite, and the experience of all ages proves it to be natural, that as we are so-

cial creatures, we should be social in religion, as well as other things, and honour in common our common Maker: that we should unite in giving thanks to him for the blessings of life; a very great part of which we should be incapable of, without uniting: that we should join in praying forgiveness of the sins, which we too often join in committing: petition him together for the mercies, which we have need of receiving together; and, by assembling to learn and acknowledge our several duties, keep alive in one another, as well as ourselves, that constant regard to piety and virtue, on which our happiness depends, here and hereafter.

Since therefore, on these accounts, there must be public worship and instruction: it is not only expedient, but necessary, that there should be also fixed times appointed for it by sufficient authority. And how much and what time should be devoted to this purpose, every society must have determined for themselves, and would have found it hard enough to agree in determining, if God had given no intimation of his will in the case. But happily we are informed, in the history of the creation, that the Maker of the world, having finished his work in six days, (which he could as easily have finished in one moment, had it not been for some valuable reason, probably of instruction to us, *blessed the seventh day and sanctified it**: that is, appointed every return of it to be religiously kept, as a solemn memorial, that *of him, and therefore to him, are all things*†. It is much the most natural to apprehend, that this appointment took place from the time when it is mentioned; from the time, when the reason of it took place. And it is no wonder at all, that, in so short a history, notice should not be taken of the actual observation of it before Moses: for notice is not taken of it in 500 years after Moses. Yet we know of a certainty, that in his time, at least, it was ordered to be observed, both in this fourth commandment, and in other parts of the law, which direct more particularly the manner of keeping it.

The thing, most expressly enjoined the Jews, in each of these passages, is, resting from all manner of work; and not suffering their families, their cattle, nor even the strangers that lived amongst them, to labour on that day. And the reason of
this

* Gen. ii. 3.

† 1. cor. xi. 36.

this rest, given in the commandment, as you have it in the book of Exodus, is, that *the Lord rested on the seventh day* from his work of creation. Not that this, or any thing, could be a fatigue to him. For *the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary* *. But the expression means, that having then finished the formation of the world, he ceased from it; and required men also to cease from their labours every seventh day; in memory of that fundamental article of all religion, that the heavens and earth were made, and therefore are governed, by one infinitely wise, powerful, and good Being. And thus was the *Sabbath*, which word means the day of rest, *a sign*, as the scripture calls it, *between God and the children of Israel* †; a mark, to distinguish them from all worshippers of false deities.

But besides this principal reason for the repose of every seventh day, two others are mentioned in the law: that it might remind them of that deliverance from heavy bondage, which God had granted them; *Remember, that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord brought thee out thence; therefore he commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day* ‡: and likewise that their servants and cattle might not be worn out with incessant toil; *that thine ox and thine ass may rest; and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed* §. Such mercy indeed is little more than common prudence: but there are in the world multitudes of hard-hearted wretches, who would pay small regard to that consideration, were they left to their own liberty.

Now, merely abstaining from common work on this day, in obedience to God's command, for such religious and moral ends as these, was undoubtedly sanctifying, or keeping it holy. But then we are not to suppose, that the leisure, thus provided for men, was to be thrown away just as they pleased, instead of being usefully employed. God directed the Jews: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy might; and the words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children; and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when*
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* Isa. xl. 28.

† Exod. xxxi. 13, 17. Ezek. xx. 12, 20.

‡ Deut. v. 15.

§ Exod. xxiii. 12.

thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up *. Now, as he required them to attend so constantly to these duties ; he could not but expect, they should attend more especially to them on that day, when the great foundation of all duty, his creating the world, was appointed to be commemorated ; and when they had nothing to take off their thoughts from what they owed to God their Maker. There was a peculiar sacrifice appointed for that day : there is a peculiar Psalm composed for it, the ninety-second : and these things are surely further intimations to us, that it must have been a time, peculiarly intended for the offering up of prayers and thanksgivings to Heaven.

Few indeed, or none, of God's laws were well observed in the days of the Old Testament. But still as the Priests and Levites were dispersed through the Jewish nation, that they might teach the people religion ; so we read, that in good times they did teach it accordingly : and when could this be, but on the Sabbath day ? We see it was the custom of religious persons, on that day, to resort to the Prophets that were in Israel ; doubtless to hear the word of God from their mouths †. We see public happiness promised on this condition, that men should “ honour the Sabbath of the Lord, not doing their own ways, nor finding their own pleasure, nor speaking their own words ‡.” We see absolute ruin threatened for the profanation of it §. We see a time foretold, when “ from one Sabbath to another all flesh should come to worship before the Lord ||.” And in consequence of this when their captivity had taught the Jews a stricter regard to their duty, synagogues, and houses of prayer, were erected *in every city* : where the Maker of all things was publicly adored, and his law *read and preached, every Sabbath day ¶*.

Such was the state of things, when our Saviour came into the world : whose religion being intended for all mankind equally, the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, in which the Jews alone were concerned, was mentioned no longer in the divine laws : but instead of the commemoration of this, was substituted that of the Redemption of the world, from the dominion

* Deut. vi. 5,—7. † 2 Kings iv. 23. ‡ Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

§ Jer. xvii. 27. || Isa. lxvi. 23. ¶ Acts xv. 21.

minion and punishment of sin : which our blessed Redeemer accomplished by his death, and proved himself to have accomplished by his resurrection. Accordingly, the first day of the week, being the day of his resurrection, was appointed, in thankful remembrance of it, for the time of public worship amongst Christians, and therefore is called by St John, *the Lord's day**; though in common language it be more usually called Sunday : as it was even before our Saviour's time, and may be for a better reason since, because on it Christ, the Sun of Righteousness arose. Accordingly some of the earliest fathers give it that name.

And that no one may doubt the lawfulness of this change of the day ; it plainly appears, from several passages of St Paul, that we are not bound to observe the day of the Jewish Sabbath : and it still more plainly appears, in the scripture history of the apostles, that they did observe, and direct the observation of our present Christian Sabbath ; as the whole church hath constantly done since, from their times to this, though it doth not appear, that they called it the Sabbath day for many hundreds of years. One day in seven being still kept, the memory of the creation is as well preserved, and the intent of this commandment as fully answered as before : and that one day in seven being chosen, on which our Saviour rose again, the memory of the redemption wrought by him, and called in scripture, *a new creation*†, is, in the properest manner, as well as with the greatest reason, perpetuated, along with the former.

The day then being thus fixed, which we ought to keep holy ; it remains to consider, how it ought to be kept. And,

1. It must be a day of rest, in order to commemorate God's *resting*, as the scripture expresses it, *from all his work, which he created and made*‡; and to allow that ease and refreshment, which, with so great humanity, the commandment requires should be given, not only to servants, but to the very cattle. Besides, it cannot be a day of religion to mankind, without such vacation from the ordinary labours of life, as may give sufficient leisure to distinguish it by exercises of piety. But then, as Christians are not under a dispensation so rigorous in outward observances, as that of Moses ; they are not bound

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* Rev. i. 10. † 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. vi. 15. ‡ Gen. ii. 3.

to so strict and scrupulous a rest, as the Jews were. Though indeed the Jews themselves became, at last, much more scrupulous in this matter than they needed; and are accordingly reproved by our blessed Saviour; from whom we learn this general rule, that *the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath**: and therefore all works of great necessity, or great goodness and mercy, if they cannot be deferred to another time, be they ever so laborious, may very allowably be done then. Only so far as the public wisdom of the laws of the land hath restrained us, we ought certainly to restrain ourselves, even from such things, as, in our private opinion, we might otherwise think innocent. As to matters of less labour; what propriety, and decency, and reasonable convenience require, we surely need not omit. And what practice of the more religious and considerate part of those, amongst whom we live, allows, hath without question no small title to our favourable opinion. But the liberties, taken by thoughtless or profane persons, are not of any authority in the least. And the safest general rule to go by, is to omit whatever may be sinful, and is needless; and neither to require, nor suffer, those who belong to us, to do, on this day, what we apprehend it unlawful to do ourselves.

2. A reasonable part of our day of holy rest, must be employed in the public worship of God. This, you have seen, the Jews understood to be requisite on their Sabbath: and the earliest account, which we have of ours, informs us, that *on the first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread*†: which means to celebrate the Lord's Supper. That with this was joined *the apostles doctrine and prayer*, we learn from another place of the same book of scripture‡. And that every Lord's day was dedicated to the public offices of piety, the history of the church fully shows from the beginning. To strengthen the obligation of attending on these offices, the laws of the land also enjoin it. And as all persons need instruction in their duty both to God and man, and the generality have scarce any other season for it, than the leisure of the Sunday: if this most valuable time be either taken from them, or thrown away by them; they must become ignorant and vicious; and of consequence miserable in this world and the next. How wicked

* Mark ii. 27. † Acts xx. 7. ‡ Acts ii. 42.

wicked then, and how unwise, is it, either to throw contempt on such an institution, or on frivolous pretences to neglect improving by it!

3. Besides assembling in the church on the Lord's day, every one should employ some reasonable part of it in the private exercises of piety: in thinking over their past behaviour, confessing their faults to God, and making prudent resolutions against them for the future; in praying for the mercies, which they more especially want, and returning thanks for the blessings, with which Providence hath favoured them; in cultivating a temper of humanity; in doing acts of forgiveness, and setting apart something according to their ability, for acts of charity; (for which last St Paul hath particularly recommended this time*:) and in seriously considering at home, whatever they have heard in God's house. For our public religion will soon degenerate into an useless form, unless we preserve and enliven the Spirit of it, by such means as these in private: to which they, above all persons, are bound on the Lord's day, who either have little leisure for them on others, or make little use of it.

When once persons have brought themselves to spend so much of the Sunday as is fitting in this manner; it will then, and not before, be time for them to ask, how the remainder of it may be spent. For it is a very bad sign, to be careless of observing what is commanded; and zealous for extending to the utmost, what at best is only permitted. Over great strictness however must be avoided. And therefore decent civility and friendly conversation may both innocently and usefully have a place in the vacant part of our Lord's day: of which it is really one valuable benefit, that it gives even the lowest persons an opportunity of appearing to each other in the most agreeable light they can, and thus promotes mutual good will. Nor is it necessary at all to banish cheerfulness from our conversation on this day; which being a festival, though a religious one, we should partake of all God's blessings upon it with joyful hearts. But then such instances of freedom and levity, in talk and behaviour, as would scarce be proper at any time, are doubly improper at this; and tend very fatally to undo

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* 1 Cor xvi. 2.

whatever good the preceding part of the day may have done.

And as to the taking further liberties of diversions and amusements, though they are not in express words forbidden, for the desire of them is not supposed in the word of God; yet by the laws both of Church and State they are. And what need is there for them, or what good use of them? If persons are so vehemently set upon these things, that they are uneasy to be so much as one day in seven without them; it is high time, that they should bring themselves to more moderation, by exercising some abstinence from them. And if they are at all indifferent about them, surely they should consider, what must be the effect of introducing and indulging them: what offence and uneasiness these things give the more serious and valuable part of the world; what comfort and countenance to the unthinking and irreligious part; what a dangerous example to the lower part: what encouragement they afford to extravagance, and the mad love of pleasure: what a snare they place in the way of all that think them unlawful; and yet will thus be tempted, to these liberties first, and then to others, against their consciences: and, to add no more, how unhappy they increase the appearance (which, without them, God knows, would be much too great) of religion being slighted and disregarded; especially by the upper part of the world, who should be the great patterns of it.

And if this be the case of merely unseasonable diversions; imprudent and unlawful ones are still more blameable on this day: but most of all, that crying sin of debauchery and intemperance, which perverts it from the service of God to the service of the devil; and leads persons, more directly than almost any thing else, to utter destruction of body and soul. Therefore let us be careful, first to guard ourselves against these transgressions, then to keep our children, servants, and dependants from the like, if we make any conscience of doing well by them, or would have any prospect of comfort in them. Nor let us think it sufficient, to restrain them from spending the day ill; but to the best of our power and understanding, encourage and assist them to spend it well. And God grant, we may all employ in so right a manner, the few Sabbaths,
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and few days, which we have to come on earth; that we may *enter*, at the conclusion of them, *into* that eternal sabbath, *that rest*, which remaineth for the people of God, in heaven.

* Heb. iv. 3 9.

LECTURE XXII.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

PART I.

HAVING explained the precepts of the first table, which set forth the duty of men to God; I now come to those of the second, which express our several obligations one to another.

Now the whole law, concerning these matters, is briefly comprehended, as St Paul very justly observes, in this one saying, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**. Our neighbour is every one, with whom we have at any time any concern, or on whose welfare our actions can have any influence. For whoever is thus within our reach, is in the most important sense near to us, however distant in other respects. To love our neighbour, is to bear him good-will; which of course will dispose us to think favourably of him, and behave properly to him. And to *love him as ourselves*, is to have, not only a real but a strong and active good-will towards him; with a tenderness for his interests, duly proportioned to that, which we naturally feel for our own. Such a temper would most powerfully restrain us from every thing wrong, and prompt us to every thing right; and therefore is "the fulfilling of the law †," so far as it relates to our mutual behaviour.

But because, on some occasions, we may either not see, or not confess we see, what is right, and what otherwise; our Saviour hath put the same duty in a light somewhat different,

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which

* Rom. xiii. 9.

† Verse 10.

which gives the safest, and fullest, and clearest direction for practice, that any one precept can give. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye unto them *." Behaving properly depends on judging truly; and that, in cases of any doubt, depends on hearing with due attention both sides. To our own side we never fail attending. The rule therefore is, give the other side the same advantage, by supposing it your own: and after considering carefully and fairly, what, if it were indeed your own, you should not only desire (for desires may be unreasonable) but think you had an equitable claim to, and well grounded expectation of, from the other party, that do in regard to him. Would we but honestly take this method, our mistakes would be so exceeding few, and slight, and innocent, that well might our blessed Lord add, *For this is the law and the prophets.*

Yet, after all, there might be difficulty sometimes, especially to some persons, in the application of a rule so very general. And therefore we have, in the commandments, the reciprocal duties of man to man branched out into six particulars: The first of which, contained in the fifth commandment, relates to the mutual obligations of superiors and inferiors; the rest, to those points in which all men are considered as equals.

It is true, the precept now to be explained, mentions only one kind of superiors. *Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother.* But the case of other superiors is so like that of fathers, that most of them have occasionally the very name of father given them in most languages; and therefore the regard, due to them also, may be very properly comprehended, and laid before you, under the same head. It is likewise true, that the duty of the inferior alone is expressed in the commandment; but the corresponding duty of the superior is, at the same time, of necessity implied: For which reason I shall discourse of both; beginning with the mutual obligations of children and parents, properly so called, which will be a sufficient employment for the present time.

Now the duty of children to their parents is here expressed by the word *honour*, which in common language signifies a mixture of love and respect, producing due obedience; but in scripture

* Matth. vii. 12.

scripture language it implies further, maintenance and support when wanted.

1. Love to those of whose flesh and blood we are, is what nature dictates to us, in the very first place. Children have not only received from their parents, as instruments in the hand of God, the original of their being; but the preservation of it through all the years of helpless infancy; when the needful care of them gave much trouble, took up much time, and required much expence; all which, parents usually go through, with so chearful a diligence, and so self-denying a tenderness, that no return of affection on the childrens part can possibly repay it to the full; though childrens affection is what, above all things, makes parents happy. Then, as life goes on, it is their parents that give or procure for them such instruction of all kinds, as qualifies them, both to do well in this world, and be for ever blessed in another; that watch over them continually with never-ceasing attention, consulting their inclinations in a multitude of obliging instances, and bearing with their perverseness in a multitude of provoking ones; kindly restraining them from a thousand pernicious follies, into which they would otherwise fall; and directing their heedless footsteps in the right way; encouraging, rewarding, and, which indeed is no less a benefit, correcting them also, as the case requires; full of solicitude all the while for their happiness, and consuming themselves with labour and thoughtfulness for these dear objects, to improve, support and advance them in their lives, and provide for them at their deaths. Even those parents, who perform these duties but imperfectly, who perhaps do some very wrong things, do notwithstanding, almost all of them, so many right and meritorious ones; that though, the more such they do, the better they should be loved; yet they that do least, do enough to be loved sincerely for it as long as they live*.

2. And with love must ever be joined, secondly, due respect, inward and outward. For parents are not only the benefactors, but in rank the betters, and in right the governors, of their children; whose dependance is upon them, in point of interest, generally; in point of duty always. They ought therefore to think of them with great reverence, and treat them

* See Xenophon's Memoirs of Socrates, l. 2. c. 2.

them with every mark of submission, in gesture, in speech, in the whole of their behaviour, which the practice of wise and good persons hath established, as proper instances of filial regard. And though the parents be mean in station, or low in understanding; still the relation continues, and the duty that belongs to it. Nay, suppose they be faulty in some part of their conduct or character, yet children should be very backward to see this: and it can very seldom be allowable for them to show that they see it. From the world they should always conceal it, as far as they can; for it is shocking beyond measure in *them* to publish it. And if ever any thing of this nature must be mentioned to the parents themselves, which nothing but great necessity can warrant or excuse; it should be with all possible gentleness and modesty, and the most real concern at being obliged to so unnatural an office.

3. Love and respect to parents will always produce obedience to them: a third duty of the highest importance. Children, for a considerable time, are utterly unqualified to govern themselves; and so long as this continues to be the case, must be absolutely and implicitly governed by those, who can alone claim a title to it. As they grow up to the use of understanding indeed, reason should be gradually mixed with authority, in every thing that is required of them. But at the same time, children may easily observe what they may easily find to be true in daily instances, that they are apt to think they know how to direct themselves, much sooner than they really do; and should therefore submit to be directed by their friends in more points, and for a longer time, than perhaps they would naturally be tempted to wish. Suppose in that part of your lives which is already past, you had had your own way in every thing, what would have been the consequences! You yourselves must see very bad ones. Why, other persons see, what you will see also in time, that it would be full as bad, were you to have your way now. And what all who are likely to know, agree in, you would believe, and submit to. Your parents and governors have at least more knowledge and experience, if they have not more capacity, than you. And the trouble which they take, and the concern which they feel about you, plainly show that your good is the thing which they have at heart. The only reason why they do not
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indulge you in the particulars that you wish, is, that they see it would hurt you. And it is a dreadful venture for you, to think, as yet, of trusting yourselves. Trust therefore to those, whom you have all manner of reason to trust; and obey them willingly, who by the laws of God and man, have a right to rule you; and, generally speaking, a power to make you obey at last, be you ever so unwilling.

Not that children are bound to obedience, in all things, without exception. Should a parent command them to lie, to steal, to commit any wickedness; God commands the contrary; and he is to be obeyed, not man. Or should a parent command any thing of consequence, directly opposite to the laws of the land, and the injunctions of public authority: here the magistrate, being the superior power, in all things that confessedly belong to jurisdiction, is to be obeyed, rather than the parent, who ought himself to be subject to the magistrate*. Or if, in other points, a parent would require what was both very evidently and very greatly, unsuitable to a child's condition and station; or had a clear tendency to make him miserable; or would be certainly and considerably prejudicial to him through the remainder of his life: where the one goes so far beyond his just bounds, the other may allowably excuse himself from complying. Only the case must be both so plain, and withal of such moment, as may justify him, not only in his own judgment, which may easily be prejudiced, but in that of every considerate person, whom he hath opportunity of consulting, and in the general opinion of mankind. And even then, the refusal must be accompanied with the greatest decency and humility; and the strictest care to make amends, by all instances of real duty, for this one seeming want of duty.

In proportion as young persons approach to that age, when the law allows them to be capable of governing themselves, they become by degrees less and less subject to the government of their parents; especially in smaller matters; for in the more important concerns of life, and above all, in the very important one of marriage, not only daughters, (concerning whom, the very phrase of *giving them in marriage*, shows, that they are not to give themselves as they please) but sons
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* See Taylor's elements of civil law, p. 387, 388, 389.

too, should have all possible regard to the authority, the judgment, the blessing, the comfort of those to whom they owe every thing. And even after they are sent out into the world, to stand on their own bottom, still they remain for ever bound not to slight them; but in all proper affairs, to consult with them, and hearken to them; as far as it can be at all expected, in reason or gratitude, that they should.

4. The last thing, which in scripture phrase of honouring parents comprehends, is affording them decent relief and support, if they are reduced to want it. For thus our Saviour explains the word, in his reproof of the Pharisees, for "making this commandment of no effect by their tradition. God commanded, Honour thy father and thy mother: but ye say, whosoever shall say to his father or mother, it is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me:" that is, what should have relieved you, I have devoted to religious uses: whosoever shall say this, and "honoureth not his father or his mother; he shall be free*." In St Mark it is, "Ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother†." And in other places of scripture, besides this, honouring a person signifies contributing to his maintenance: as 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. "Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine; for the scripture saith, the labourer is worthy of his reward."

How worthy parents are of this, as well as the other sorts of honour, when they need it, sufficiently appears from all that hath been said. If they deserve to be loved and respected; surely they are not to be left exposed to distress and want, by those whom they have brought into life; and for whom they have done so much: but children, even if they are poor, should both be diligent in working, and provident in saving, to keep their helpless parents from extremities: and if they are in competent good circumstances, should allow them a liberal share of the plenty which they enjoy themselves. Accordingly St Paul directs, that both *children* and *nephews*, that is, grand-children, for so the word *nephew* always means in scripture, should "learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God."

* Matth. xv. 4,—6.

† Mark vii. 12.

God*." Indeed nature, as well as Christianity, enjoins it so strongly, that the whole world cries out shame, where it is neglected. And the same reason, which requires parents to be assisted in their necessities, requires children also to attend upon them, and minister to them, with vigilant assiduity and tender affection, in their infirmities; and to consult, on every occasion, their desires, their peace, their ease. And they should consider both what they contribute to their support, and every other instance of regard, which they show them, not as an alms, given to an inferior: but as a tribute of duty paid to a superior. For which reason perhaps it may be, that relieving them is mentioned in scripture under the notion of honouring them.

One thing more to be observed, is, that all these duties of children belong equally to both parents; the mother being as expressly named as the father, in the commandment; and having the same right in point of reason. Only, if contrary orders are given by the two parents to the child; he is bound to obey that parent rather, whom the other is bound to obey also: but still preserving to each all due reverence: from which nothing, not even the command of either, can discharge him†.

And now I proceed to the duties of parents to their children: on which there is much less need to enlarge, than on the other. For not only parents have more understanding to know their duty, and stronger affections to prompt them to do it: but indeed, a great part of it hath been already intimated, in setting forth that of children to them. It is the duty of parents, to take all that kind care, which is the main foundation of love; to keep up such authority, as may secure respect; to give such reasonable commands, as may engage a willing obedience: and thus to make their children so good, and themselves so esteemed by them, that they may depend, in case of need, on assistance and succour from them.

More particularly, they are bound to think them, from the first, worthy of their own inspection and pains; and not abandon them to the negligence, or bad management of others: so to be tender of them, and indulge them, as not to encourage

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* 1 Tim. v. 4.

† Pietas Parentibus, et si inæqualis est eorum potestas, æqua debetur. D. 27. 10. 4.

their faults ; so to reprove and correct them, as not to break their spirits, or provoke their hatred ; to instil into them the knowledge, and require of them the practice, of their duty to God and man ; and recommend to them every precept, both of religion and morality, by what is the strongest recommendation, a good and amiable example : to breed them up as suitably to their condition, as may be ; but to be sure not above it ; watching over them with all the care that conduces to health ; but allowing them in none of the softness that produces luxury or indolence ; or of the needless distinctions that pamper pride : to begin preparing them early, according to their future station in life, for being useful in it, to others and themselves : to provide conscientiously for their spiritual and eternal, as well as temporal good, in disposing of them ; and bestow on them willingly, as soon as it is fit, whatever may be requisite to settle them properly in the world : to lay up for them, not by injustice, penuriousness, or immoderate solicitude, all that they can ; but by honest and prudent diligence and attention, as much as is sufficient ; and to distribute this amongst them, not as fondness, or resentment, or caprice, or vanity, may dictate ; but in a reasonable and equitable manner ; such as will be likeliest to make those who receive it, love one another, and esteem the memory of the giver.

These are, in brief, the mutual duties of parents and children : and you will easily perceive that they are the duties, in proportion, of all who by any occasional, or accidental means, come to stand in the stead of parents or of children. The main thing which wants to be observed, is, that from the neglect of these duties on one side, or on both, proceeds a very great part of the wickedness and misery, that is in the world. May God incline the hearts of all that are concerned either way in this most important relation, so to practise the several obligations of it, as may procure to them, in this world, reciprocal satisfaction and joy, and eternal felicity in that which is to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

LECTURE XXIII.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

PART II.

IN my last discourse I began to explain the fifth commandment: and having already gone through the duties of children and parents, properly so called, I come now to the other sorts of inferiors and superiors: all which have sometimes the same names given them, and are comprehended under the reason and equity of this precept.

And here, the first relation to be mentioned, is, that between private subjects and those in authority over them: a relation so very like that of children and fathers, that the duties on both sides are much the same in each.

But, more particularly, the duty of subjects, is, to obey the laws of whatever government Providence hath placed us under, in every thing which is not contrary to the laws of God; and to contribute willingly to its support, every thing that is legally required, or may be reasonably expected of us: to be faithful and true to the interests of that society, of which we are members; and to the persons of those who govern it; paying, both to the Supreme Power, and all subordinate magistrates, every part of that submission and respect, both in speech and behaviour, which is their due; and making all those allowances in their favour which the difficulty of their office, and the frailty of our common nature, demand: to love and wish well to all our fellow-subjects, without exception; think of them charitably, and treat them kindly; to be peaceable and quiet, each minding diligently the duties of his own station; not factious and turbulent, intruding into the concerns of others: to be modest and humble, *not exercising ourselves in matters too high for us* *; but leaving such things to the care of

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* Psalm cxxxi. 1.

our superiors, and the providence of God : to be thankful for the blessings and advantages of government, in proportion as we enjoy them ; and reasonable and patient under the burdens and inconveniencies of it, which at any time we may suffer.

The duty of princes and magistrates, it would be of little use to enlarge on at present. In general it is, to confine the exercise of their power within the limits of those laws, to which they are bound ; and direct it to the attainment of those ends, for which they were appointed : to execute their proper function with care and integrity, as *men fearing God, men of truth, hating covetousness* * ; to do all persons impartial justice, and consult, in all cases, the public benefit ; encouraging religion and virtue with zeal, especially by a good example ; punishing crimes with steadiness, yet with moderation ; and *studying to preserve the people committed to their charge, in wealth, peace, and godliness* †.

Another relation, to be brought under this commandment, is, that between spiritual fathers, the teachers of religion, and such as are to be taught.

The duty of us who have undertaken the important work of spiritual guides and teachers, is, to deliver the doctrines and precepts of our holy religion, in the plainest and strongest terms that we can ; insisting on such things chiefly, as will be most conducive to the real and inward benefit of our hearers ; and recommending them, in the most prudent and persuasive manner ; *seeking to please all men for their good, to edification* ‡ : but fearing no man in the discharge of our consciences ; and neither saying nor omitting any thing, for the sake of applause from the many, or the few ; or of promoting either our own wealth and power, or that of our order : to instruct, exhort, and comfort, all that are placed under our care, with sincerity, discretion, and tenderness, privately as well as publicly, so far as they give us opportunity, or we discern hope of doing service ; *watching for the souls, as they that must give account* § ; to rule in the church of God with vigilance, humility, and meekness, *showing ourselves, in all things, patterns of good works* ||.

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* Exod. xviii. 21.

† Communion Office.

‡ Rom. xv. 2.

§ 1 Cor. x. 33.

|| Heb. xiii. 17.

|| Tit. ii. 7.

The duty of you, the Christian Laity, whom we are to teach is, to attend constantly and seriously on religious worship and instruction, as a sacred ordinance appointed by Heaven for your spiritual improvement; to consider impartially and carefully what you hear, and believe, and practise what you are convinced you ought; to observe with due regard the rules established for decent order and edification in the church; and pay such respect, in word and deed, to those who minister to you in holy things, as the interest and honour of religion require; accepting and encouraging our well-meant services, and bearing charitably with our many imperfections and failings.

A third relation is, that between masters or mistresses of schools and their scholars. The duty of the former is, diligently to instruct the children committed to them, in all the things which they are put to learn, suiting their manner of teaching, as well as they can, to the temper and capacity of each; and to take effectual care that they apply themselves to what is taught them, and do their best; to watch over their behaviour, especially in the great points of honesty and truth, modesty and good-humour; show countenance to such as are well-behaved and promising; correct the faulty with needful, yet not with excessive severity; and get the incorrigible removed out of the way, before they corrupt others. And the duty of the scholars is, to reverence and obey their master or mistress, as if they were their parents; to live friendly and lovingly with one another, as brethren or sisters; to be heartily thankful to all, that give or procure them so valuable a blessing as useful knowledge; and industrious to improve in it; considering, how greatly their happiness, here and hereafter, depends upon it.

I come now to a fourth relation, of great extent and importance, that between heads of families and their servants.

When the New Testament was written, the generality of servants were, as in many places they are still, mere slaves; and the persons to whom they belonged, had a right to their labour, and that of their posterity, for ever, without giving them any other wages than their maintenance; and with a power to inflict on them what punishments they pleased; for the most part, even death itself, if they would. God be thanked, service amongst us, is a much happier thing; the conditions

tions of it being usually no other, than the servants themselves voluntarily enter into, for their own benefit. But then, for that reason, they ought to perform whatever is due from them, both more conscientiously, and more chearfully.

Now from servants is due, in the first place, obedience. Indeed if they are commanded what is plainly unlawful, they *ought to obey God rather than men* *; but still must excuse themselves decently, though resolutely. And even lawful things, which they have not bargained to do, they are not obliged to do; nor any thing indeed, which is clearly and greatly unsuitable to their place and station, and improper to be required of them. But whatever they engaged, or knew they were expected to do; or what, though they did not know of it beforehand, is usual and reasonable, or even not very unreasonable, they must submit to. For if they may, on every small pretence, refuse to do *this*, and question whether *that* belongs to their place, it is most evident, that all authority and order in families must be at an end: and they themselves will have much more trouble in disputing about their business, than they would have in performing it.

Servants therefore should obey; and they should do it respectfully and readily; not murmuring, behaving gloomily and sullenly, as if their work were not due for their wages; but, as the apostle exhorts, *with good will doing service* †; *not answering again* ‡, and contradicting, as if those, whom they serve, were their equals; but paying all fit honour to their master or mistress, and to every one in the family.

They are also to obey with diligence: To spend as much time in work, and follow it as closely all that time, as can be fairly expected from them; *not with eye-service as men pleasers*, (these are the words of scripture, twice repeated there) *but in singleness of heart, fearing God* §. Whatever industry therefore a reasonable master would require, when his eye is upon them: the same, in the main, honest servants will use, when his eye is not upon them: For his presence or absence can make no difference in their duty. He hath agreed with them for their time and pains; and he must not be defrauded of them.

With diligence must always be joined care, that no business be neglected, or delayed beyond its proper season; nothing mismanaged for want of thinking about it; nothing heedlessly,

* Acts v. 29. † Eph. vi. 7. ‡ Tit. ii. 9. § Eph. vi. 6. Col. iii. 22.

ly, much less designedly, wasted and squandered ; but all reasonable frugality and good contrivance shown ; and all fair advantages taken, yet no other, for the benefit of those who employ them. Every servant would think this but common justice in his own case ; and therefore should do it as common justice in his master's case. Some perhaps may imagine, that their master's estate or income is well able to afford them to be careless or extravagant. But the truth is, few or no incomes can afford this. For if it be practised in one thing, why not in another ? And what must follow, if it be practised in all ? That certainly which we daily see, that persons of the greatest estates are distressed and ruined by it. Or though it would not distress them all, yet a master's wealth is no more a justification of servants wasting what belongs to him, than of their stealing it : And if the one be dishonest, the other must.

Now dishonesty every body owns to be a crime : but every body doth not consider sufficiently how many sorts of it there are. Observe then, that, besides the instances already mentioned, and the gross ones that are punishable by law, it is dishonest in a servant, either to take to himself, or give to another, or consent to the taking or giving, whatever he knows he is not allowed, and durst not do with his master's knowledge. There are, to be sure, various degrees of this fault ; some not near so bad as others : but it is the same kind of fault in all of them : besides that the smaller degrees lead to the greater. And all dishonesty, bad as it is in other persons, is yet worse in those who are intrusted, as servants are ; and things put in their power upon that trust ; which if they break, they are unfaithful, as well as unjust.

Another sort of dishonesty is speaking falsehoods : Against which I have already, in the course of these lectures, given some cautions, and shall give more : therefore at present I shall only say, that, whether servants are guilty of it amongst themselves, or to their masters or mistresses, whether against or in favour of one another, or even in their own favour, there are few things, by which they may both do and suffer more harm than a lying tongue.

Truth therefore is a necessary quality in servants. And a further one is proper secrecy. For there is great unfairness in betraying the secrets, either of their master's business,

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or his family; or turning to his disadvantage any thing that comes to their knowledge by being employed under him; unless it be where conscience obliges them to a discovery; which is a case that seldom happens. And, excepting that case, what they have promised to conceal, it is palpable wickedness to disclose: And where they have not promised, yet they are taken into their master's house to be assistants and friends, not spies and tale-bearers; to do service, not harm, to him, and to every one that is under his roof.

Two other duties, of all persons indeed, but in some measure peculiarly of servants, are: sobriety, without which they can neither be careful nor diligent, nor will be likely to continue just; and chastity, the want of which will produce all manner of disorders and mischiefs in the family to which they belong, and utter ruin to themselves.

The last requisite, which I shall mention, is peaceableness and good temper, agreeing with and helping one another, and making the work, which they have to do, easy, and the lives which they are to lead together, comfortable. For it is very unfit, that either their masters or any other part of the family should suffer through their ill-humour: and indeed they suffer enough by it themselves, to make restraining it well worth their while.

These are the duties of servants: and as the faithful performance of them is the surest way of serving themselves, and being happy in this world; so, if it proceed from a true principle of conscience, God will accept it, as service done to himself, and make them eternally happy for it in the next: whereas wilfully transgressing, or negligently slighting, the things which they ought to do, whatever pleasure, or whatever advantage it may promise or produce to them for a while, will seldom fail of bringing them at last to shame and ruin even here, and will certainly bring them, unless they repent and amend, to misery hereafter.

But think not, I entreat you, that we will lay burthens on those below us, and take none upon ourselves. There are duties also, and very necessary ones, which masters and mistresses owe to their servants.

To behave towards them with meekness and gentleness, not imperiously and with contempt; and to restrain them as far as may be, from giving bad usage one to another; never to accuse,



cuse, threaten, or suspect them, without or beyond reason; to hear patiently their defences and complaints; and bear, with due moderation, their mistakes and faults: neither to make them when in health, work or fare harder than is fitting; nor suffer them, when in sickness, to want any thing requisite for their comfort and relief: if they be hired servants, to pay their wages fully and punctually at the time agreed: if they are put to learn any business or profession, to instruct them in it carefully and thoroughly: not only to give them time for the exercises of religion; but assistance to understand, and encouragement to practise, every part of their duty: to keep them, as much as possible, both from sin and temptation, and particularly from corrupting each other: to show displeasure, when they do amiss, as far, and no farther than the case requires; and to countenance and reward them, when they serve well, in proportion to the merit and length of such service. For all these things are natural dictates of reason and humanity; and clearly implied in that comprehensive rule of scripture: *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven* *.

There are still two sorts more, of inferiors and superiors, that may properly be mentioned under this commandment: young persons and elder; those of low and high degree.

The duty of the younger is, to moderate their own rashness and love of pleasure; to reverence the persons and advice of the aged; and neither use them ill, nor despise them, on account of the infirmities that may accompany advanced years; considering in what manner they will expect hereafter that others should treat them. And the duty of elder persons is, to make all fit allowances, but no hurtful ones, to the natural dispositions of young people: to instruct them with patience, and reprove them with mildness; not to require either too much or too long submission from them; but be willing that they, in their turn, should come forward into the world; gradually withdrawing themselves from the heavier cares, and the lighter pleasures of this life; and waiting with pious resignation to be called into another.

The duty of the lower part of the world to those above them, in rank, fortune, or office, is, not to envy them; or murmur

at the superiority, which a wise, though mysterious, Providence hath given them; but *in whatever state they are, therewith to be content**; and pay willingly to others all the respect, which decency or custom have made their due. At the same time, the duty of those in higher life is, to relieve the poor, protect the injured, countenance the good, discourage the bad, as they have opportunity; not to scorn, much less to oppress, the meanest of their brethren; but to remember, that *we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ*†; where *he that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons*‡.

And now, were but all these duties conscientiously observed by all the world, how happy a place would it be! And whoever will faithfully do their own part of them, they shall be happy, whether others will do theirs or not; and this commandment assures them of it; *that thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee*. In all probability, if we obey his laws, and that now before us in particular, both longer and more prosperous will our days prove in this land of our pilgrimage, in which God hath placed us to sojourn; but, without all question, eternal and infinite shall our felicity be, in that land of promise, the heavenly Canaan, which he hath appointed for our inheritance; and which that we may all inherit accordingly, He of his mercy grant, &c.

* Phil. iv. 11. † Rom. xiv. 10. ‡ Col. iii. 25.

LECTURE XXIV.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

HAVING set before you, under the fifth commandment, the particular duties, which inferiors and superiors owe each to the other; I proceed now to those remaining precepts, which express the general duties of all men to all men.

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Amongst these, as life is the foundation of every thing valuable to us, the preservation of it is justly intitled to the first place. And accordingly the sixth commandment is, *Thou shalt do no murder*. Murder is taking away a person's life, with design, and without authority. Unless both concur, it doth not deserve that name.

1. It is not murder, unless it be with design. He, who is duly careful to avoid doing harm, and unhappily, notwithstanding that, kills another, though he hath cause to be extremely sorry for it, yet is entirely void of guilt on account of it. For his will having no share in the action, it is not, in a moral sense, his. But if he doth the mischief through heedlessness, or levity of mind, or inconsiderate vehemence, here is a fault. If the likelihood of mischief could be foreseen, the fault is greater; and the highest degree of such negligence, or impetuous rashness, comes near to bad intention.

2. It is not murder, unless it be without authority. Now a person hath authority, from the law both of God and man, to defend his own life, if he cannot do it otherwise, by the death of whoever attacks it unjustly: whose destruction, in that case, is of his own seeking, and *his blood on his own head* *. But nothing, short of the most imminent danger, ought ever to carry us to such an extremity: and a good person will spare ever so bad a one, as far as he can with any prospect of safety. Again, proper magistrates have authority to sentence offenders to death, on sufficient proof of such crimes as the welfare of the community requires to be thus punished; and to employ others in the execution of that sentence. And private persons have authority, and in proper circumstances are obliged, to seize and prosecute such offenders: for all this is only another sort of self-defence; defending the public from what else would be pernicious to it. And the scripture hath said, that the Sovereign Power *beareth not the sword in vain* †. But in whatever cases gentler punishments would sufficiently answer the ends of government, surely capital ones are forbidden by this commandment. Self-defence, in the last place, authorises whole nations to make war upon other nations, when it is the only way to obtain redress of injuries, which cannot be supported; or security against impending ruin. To

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* 2 Sam. i. 16. 1 Kin. ii. 37. Ezek. xxxiii. 4.

† Rom. xiii. 4.

determine, whether the state is indeed in these unhappy circumstances, belongs to the supreme jurisdiction: and the question ought to be considered very conscientiously. For wars, begun or continued without necessity, are unchristian and inhuman: as many murders are committed, as lives are lost in them; besides the innumerable sins and miseries of other sorts with which they are always attended. But subjects, in their private capacity, are incompetent judges of what is requisite for the public weal: nor can the guardians of it permit them to act upon their judgment, were they to make one. Therefore they may lawfully serve in wars, which their superiors have unlawfully undertaken, excepting perhaps such offensive wars as are notoriously unjust. In others, it is no more the business of the soldiery to consider the grounds of their sovereign's taking up arms, than it is the business of the executioner to examine whether the magistrate hath passed a right sentence.

You see then, in what cases killing is not murder: in all, but these, it is. And you cannot fail of seeing the guilt of this crime to be singularly great and heinous. It brings designedly upon one of our brethren, without cause, what human nature abhors and dreads most. It cuts him off from all the enjoyments of this life at once, and sends him into another, for which possibly he was not yet prepared. It defaces the image, and defeats the design, of God. It overturns the great purpose of government and laws, mutual safety. It robs the society of a member, and consequently of part of its strength. It robs the relations, friends, and dependents, of the person destroyed, of every benefit and pleasure, which else they might have had from him. And the injury done, in all these respects, hath the terrible aggravation, that it cannot be recalled. Most wisely therefore hath our Creator surrounded murder with a peculiar horror; that nature, as well as reason, may deter from it every one, who is not utterly abandoned to the worst of wickedness: and most justly hath he appointed the sons of Noah, that is, all mankind, to punish death with death. *Who so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man**. And that nothing may protect so daring an offender, he enjoined the Jews, in the chapter which

* Gen. ix. 6.

which follows the ten commandments ; “ If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour to slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from mine altar that he may die*.” But supposing, what seldom happens, that the murderer may escape judicial vengeance ; yet what piercing reflections, what continual terrors and alarms must he carry about with him ! And could he be hardened against these, it would only subject him the more inevitably to that future condemnation, from which nothing but the deepest repentance can possibly exempt him. For “ no murderer hath eternal life † ;” but they “ shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death ‡.”

But shocking, and deserving of punishment here and hereafter, as this crime always is ; yet there are circumstances, which may augment it greatly. If the person, whom any one deprives of life, be placed in lawful authority over him ; or united in relation or friendship to him ; or have done him kindnesses ; or only never have done him harm ; or be, in a peculiar degree, good, useful, or pitiable ; each of these things considerably increases the sin, though some indeed more than others. Again, if the horrid fact be formally contrived, and perhaps the design carried on through a length of time ; this argues a much more steady and inflexible depravity of heart, than the commission of it in a sudden rage. But still, even the last, though it hath, in the law of this country, a different name, of man-slaughter, given it, and a different punishment prescribed for the first offence ; yet in the sight of God is as truly murder as the former, though freer from aggravations. The mischief done is done purposely ; and neither passion, nor provocation, gives authority for doing it, or even any great excuse. For as God hath required us, he hath certainly enabled us, to restrain the hottest sallies of our anger, especially from such enormities as this.

Nor doth it materially alter the nature, or lessen at all the degree of the sin, if, whilst we attack another, we give him an opportunity to defend himself, and attack us : as in duelling. Still taking away his life is murder : exposing our own is so likewise ; as I shall quickly shew you. And an appointment of two persons to meet for this purpose, under pretence of being

* Exod. xxi. 14.

† 1 John iii. 15.

‡ Rev. xxi. 8.

ing bound to it by their honour, is an agreement in form to commit, for the sake of an absurd notion, or rather an unmeaning word, the most capital offence against each other, and their Maker; of which, if their intention succeed, they cannot have time to repent.

As to the manner in which murder is committed; whether a person do it directly himself, or employ another; whether he do it by force, or fraud, or colour of justice; accusing falsely, or taking any unfair advantage: these things make little further difference in the guilt, than that the most artful and studied way is generally the worst.

And though a design of murder should not take effect; yet whoever hath done all that he could towards it, is plainly as much a sinner, as if it had. Nay, doing any thing towards it, or so much as once intending it, or assisting or encouraging any other who intends it, is the same sort of wickedness. And if a person doth not directly design the death of another; yet if he designedly doth what he knows or suspects may probably occasion it; he is, in proportion to his knowledge, or suspicion, guilty. Nay, if he is only negligent in matters, which may affect human life; or meddles with them, when he hath cause to think he understands them not; he is far from innocent. And there are several professions and employments, in which these truths ought to be considered with a peculiar degree of seriousness.

Further yet: If it be criminal to contribute in any manner towards taking away a person's life immediately; it must be criminal also to contribute any thing towards shortening it, which is taking it away after a time: whether by bringing any bodily disease upon him, or causing him any grief or anxiety of mind, or by what indeed will produce both, distressing him in his circumstances: concerning which the son of Sirach saith: *He that taketh away his neighbour's living slayeth him; and he that defraudeth the labourer of his hire, is a blood-shedder*.*

Indeed, if we cause or procure any sort of hurt to another, tho' it hath no tendency to deprive him of life, yet if it makes any part of his life, more or less, uneasy or uncomfortable, we deprive him so far of what makes it valuable to him: which

* Ecclus. xxxiv. 22.

is equivalent to taking so much of it away from him, or possibly worse.

Nay, if we do a person no harm; yet if we wish him harm, St John hath determined the case: *Whoever hateth his brother is a murderer* *. For indeed, hatred not only leads to murder; and too often, when indulged, produces it unexpectedly; but it is always, though perhaps for the most part in a lower degree, the very spirit of murder in the heart; and it is by our hearts that God will judge us. Nay, should our dislike of another not rise to fixed hatred and malice; yet if it rise to unjust anger, we know our Saviour's declaration. *It was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill: and whoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, whoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment* †. That is, whoever is angry, either with persons that he ought not, or more vehemently, or sooner, or longer than he ought, is guilty, in some measure, of that uncharitableness of which murder is the highest act; and liable to the punishment of it in the same proportion.

Nor even yet have I carried the explanation of this commandment to the extent of our duty. Whoever doth not, as far as can be reasonably expected from him, endeavour to guard his neighbour from harm, to make peace, to relieve distress and want, fails of what love to human kind certainly requires. Now, *love is the fulfilling of the law* ‡: and *he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death* §.

We are also carefully to observe, that however heinous it is, to sin against the temporal life of any one; injuring him in respect of his eternal interests, is yet unspeakably worse. If it be unlawful to kill or hurt the body, or overlook mens worldly necessities; much more is it to *destroy* the soul of *our brother, for whom Christ died* ||; or any way endanger it; or even suffer it to continue in danger, if we have in our power the proper and likely means of delivering it. And on the other hand, all that mercy and humanity, which, in the civil concerns of our neighbours, is so excellent a duty, must proportionably be still more excellent in their religious ones, and of higher value in the sight of God.

Hitherto

* 1 John iii. 15.

† Mat. v. 21, 22.

‡ Rom. xiii. 10.

§ 1 John iii. 14.

|| Rom. xiv. 15.

Hitherto I have considered the prohibition, *Thou shalt do no murder*, as respecting others: but it forbids also self-murder. As we are not to commit violence against the image of God in the person of any of our brethren; so neither in our own. As we are not to rob the society to which we belong, or any part of it, of the service, which any other of its members might do it; we are not to rob either of what we might do. As we are not to send any one else out of the world prematurely; we are not to send ourselves; but *wait with patience all the days of our appointed time, till our change come**. If the sins which persons have committed prompt them to despair; they of all others, instead of rushing into the presence of God by adding this dreadful one to them, should earnestly desire *space to repent*†; which, by his grace, the worst of sinners may do, and be forgiven. If their misfortunes or sufferings make them weary of life; he hath sent them these with design, that they should not by unlawful means evade them, but go thro' them well: whether they be inflicted for the punishment of their faults, or the trial of their virtues. In either case, we are to submit quietly to the discipline of our heavenly Father: which he will not suffer to be heavier than we can bear, whatever we may imagine; but will support us under it, improve us by it, and in due time release us from it. But in any case for persons to make away with themselves, is to arraign the constitution of things which he hath appointed; and to refuse living where he hath put them to live: a very provoking instance of undutifulness, and made peculiarly fatal by this circumstance, that leaving usually no room for repentance, it leaves none for pardon: always excepting, where it proceeds from a mind so disordered by a bodily disease, as to be incapable of judging or acting reasonably. For God knows with certainty when this is the cause, and when not: and will accordingly either make due allowances, or make none.

And if destroying ourselves be a sin, doing any thing wilfully or heedlessly, that tends to our destruction, must in proportion be a sin. Where indeed necessity requires great hazards to be run by some persons for the good of others: as in war, in extinguishing dangerous fires, in several cases which might be named; or where employments and professions which
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* Job xiv. 14

† Rev. ii. 21.

somebody or other must undertake, or such diligence in any employment as men are by accidents really called to use, impair health and shorten life; there, far from being thrown away, it is laudibly spent in the service of God and man. But for any person to bring on himself an untimely end, by adventurous rashness, by ungoverned passion, by immoderate anxiety, or by an obstinate or careless neglect of his own preservation, is unquestionably sinful. And, above all, doing it by debauchery or immoral excess, is a most effectual way of ruining soul and body at once.

Let us therefore be conscientiously watchful against every thing which may provoke or entice us to be injurious, either to others or ourselves. And God grant, that we may so regard the lives of our fellow-creatures, and so employ our own, that we may ever please the Giver and Lord of life: and having faithfully lived to him here, may eternally live with him hereafter, through Jesus Christ our only Saviour. Amen.

LECTURE XXV.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

IN speaking to this commandment, it is proper to begin with observing, that as in the sixth, where murder is forbidden, every thing which tends to it, or proceeds from the same bad principle with it, is forbidden too: so here, in the seventh, where adultery is prohibited, the prohibition must be extended to whatever else is criminal in the same kind. And therefore in explaining it, I shall treat, first of the fidelity which it requires from married persons, and then of the chastity and modesty which it requires from all persons.

First of the fidelity owing to each other from married persons.

Not only the scripture-account of the creation of mankind is a proof to as many as believe in scripture, that the union of one man with one woman was the original design and will of Heaven ; but the remarkable equality of males and females born into the world is an evidence of it to all men. Yet notwithstanding, it must be owned, the cohabitation of one man with several wives at the same time was practised very anciently in the darker ages, even by some of the patriarchs, who were otherwise good persons ; but, having no explicit revealed rule concerning this matter, failed of discerning the above-mentioned purpose of God. And both this error and that of divorce on slight occasions, were tolerated by the law of Moses. But that was only as the laws of other countries often connive at what the Lawgiver is far from approving. Accordingly God expressed, particularly by the Prophet Malachi *, his dislike of these things. And our Saviour both tells the Jews, that Moses permitted divorces at pleasure, merely "because of the hardness of their hearts," and peremptorily declares, that "whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery†." Now certainly it cannot be less adulterous to marry a second without putting away the first.

Nor is polygamy (that is, the having more wives than one at once) prohibited in holy writ alone, but condemned by many of the heathens themselves, who alledge against it very plain and forcible reasons. It is inconsistent with a due degree of mutual affection in the parties, and due care in the education of their children. It introduces into families perpetual subjects of the bitterest enmity and jealousy ; keeps a multitude of females in most unnatural bondage, frequently under guardians fitted for the office by unnatural cruelty ; and tempts a multitude of males, thus left unprovided for, to unnatural lusts. In civilized and well-regulated countries therefore, single marriages have either been established at first, or prevailed afterwards on experience of their preferableness : and a mutual promise of inviolable faithfulness to the marriage-bed hath been understood to be an essential part of the contract : which promise is with us most solemnly expressed in the office of matrimony, by as clear and comprehensive words as can be devised.

* Mal. ii. 14, — 16.

† Mat. xix 8, 9.

fed. And unless persons are at liberty in all cases to slight the most awful vows to God, and the most deliberate engagements of each to the other; how can they be at liberty in this, where public good and private happiness are so deeply interested?

Breaches of plighted faith, as they must be preceded by a want of sufficient conjugal affection in the offending party, so they tend to extinguish all the remains of it: and this change will be perceived, and will give uneasiness to the innocent one, though the cause be hid. But if it be known, or merely suspected by the person wronged, (which it seldom fails to be in a little time) it produces, from the make of the human mind, in warmer tempers, a resentment so strong, in milder, an affliction of heavy, that few things in the world equal either. *For love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave, the coals thereof are coals of fire**. And, with whatever vehemence they burn inwardly or outwardly, it can be no wonder; when perfidious unkindness is found in that nearest relation, where truth and love were deliberately pledged, and studiously paid on one side, in expectation of a suitable return; and when the tenderest part of the enjoyment of life is given up beyond recall into the hands of a traitor, who turns it into the acutest misery. To what a height grief and anger on one side, and neglect ripened into scorn and hatred on the other, may carry such calamities, cannot be foreseen: but at least they utterly destroy that union of hearts, that reciprocal confidence, that openness of communication, that sameness of interests, of joys and of sorrows, which constitute the principal felicity of the married state. And besides, how very frequently do the consequences of these transgressions affect, and even ruin, the health or the fortune, it may be both, of the blameless person in common with the other: and perhaps derive down diseases and poverty to successive generations!

These are fruits which unfaithfulness in either party may produce. In one it may produce yet more. A woman, guilty of this crime, who, to use the words of scripture, *forsoaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God* †, brings peculiar disgrace on her husband, her children, and friends; and may bring an illegitimate offspring to inherit

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* Cant. viii. 6.

† Prov. ii. 17

what is the right of others ; nor is the infamy and punishment, to which she exposes herself, a less dreadful evil for being a deserved one. And if falsehood on the mens part hath not all the same aggravations, it hath very great ones in their stead. They are almost constantly the tempters : they often carry on their wicked designs for a long time together : they too commonly use the vilest means to accomplish them. And as they claim the strictest fidelity, it is ungenerous, as well as unjust, to fail of paying it. All men must feel how bitter it would be to them to be injured in this respect ; let them think then what it is to be injurious in it : and since the crime is the same when committed by them, as when committed against them, let them own that it deserves the same condemnation from the Judge of the world. *The Lord hath been witness, saith the Prophet, between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou dealest treacherously ; yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth* *.

It will be safest, but I hope it is not necessary, to add, that an unmarried man or woman, offending with the wife or husband of any one, being no less guilty of adultery than the person with whom the offence is committed, is consequently an accomplice in all the wickedness and all the mischief above-mentioned ; and this frequently with aggravating circumstances of the greatest baseness, and treachery, and ingratitude, and cruelty, that can be imagined. Whatever some may plead, surely none can think such behaviour defensible ; and most surely they will not find it so : for *marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled ; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge* †.

The crime of adultery being so great, it follows, that all improper familiarities, which, though undesignedly, may lead to adultery, and all imprudent behaviour which may give suspicion of it, is to be avoided as matter of conscience ; that all groundless jealousy is to be checked by those who are inclined to it, and discouraged by others, as most heinous injustice ; and that every thing should be carefully observed by both parties, which may endear them to each other. No persons therefore should ever enter into the marriage-bond with
such

* Mal. ii. 14, 15.

† Heb. xiii. 4.

such as they cannot esteem and love; and all persons who have entered into it, should use all means, not only to preserve esteem and love, but to increase it: affectionate condescension on the husband's part, chearful submission on the wife's; mildness and tenderness, prudence and attention to their common interest, and that of their joint posterity, on both parts. It is usually, in a great measure at least, from the want of these engaging qualities in one or the other, that falsehood arises. And if that doth not, some other evil will; too likely to produce effects equally grievous, and therefore to be considered as equally forbidden.

But now, from the mutual fidelity required of married persons, I proceed, secondly, to the chastity and modesty required of all persons.

Supposing that only such as live single were to be guilty with each other; yet by means even of this licentiousness, in proportion as it prevails, the regularity and good order of society is overturned, the credit and peace of families destroyed, the proper disposal of young people in marriage prevented, the due education of children and provision for them neglected, the keenest animosities perpetually excited, and the most shocking murders frequently committed, of the parties themselves, their rivals, their innocent babes: in short, every enormity follows from hence, that lawless passion can introduce. For all sins indeed, but especially this, leads persons on to more and greater: to all manner of falsehood to secure their success, all manner of dishonesty to provide for the expensiveness of these courses, all manner of barbarity to hide the shame or lighten the inconveniencies of them: till thus they become abandoned to every crime, by indulging this one.

But let us consider the fatal effects of it on the two sexes, separately. Women, that lose their innocence, which seldom fails of being soon discovered, lose their good name intirely along with it; are marked out and given up at once to almost irrecoverable infamy: and even mere suspicion hath in some measure the same bad consequences with certain proof. It is doubtless, extremely unjust to work up mere imprudencies into gross transgressions: and even the greatest transgressors ought to be treated with all possible compassion, when they appear truly penitent. But, unless they appear so, a wide distinction between them and others ought to be made. And they

they who contribute, whether designedly or thoughtlessly, to place good, bad, and doubtful characters all on a level, do most preposterously obscure and debase their own virtue, if they have any; keep guilt in countenance, and defraud right conduct of the peculiar esteem which belongs to it: thus injuring at once the cause of religion and morals, and the interests of society. But besides the general disregard, of which vicious women will experience not a little, even in places and times of the most relaxed ways of thinking, they have a forer evil to expect; of being, sooner or later, for the most part very soon, cast off and abandoned, with contempt and scorn, by their seducers. Or even should they have reparation made them by marriage; this doth not take away the sin at all, and the disgrace but very imperfectly: not to say, that it still leaves them peculiarly exposed to the reproaches and the jealousy of their husbands ever after.

And if men, that seduce women, are not looked on by the world with so much abhorrence, as women that are seduced, at least they deserve to be looked on with greater. For there cannot easily be more exquisite wickedness, than, merely for the gratifying of a brutal appetite or idle fancy, to change all the prospect, which a young person hath of being happy and respected through life, into guilt, and dishonour, and distress, out of which too probably she will never be disentangled, under the false and treacherous pretence of tender regard. If we have any feeling of conscience within us, we must feel this to be most unworthy behaviour. And if the Ruler of the world hath any attention to the moral character of his rational creatures, which is the noblest object of his attention, that can be conceived, he must shew it on such occasions: and therefore may be believed, when he saith He will.

But supposing men not to corrupt the innocent, but to sin with such alone as make a profession of sin; yet even this manner of breaking the law of God hath most dreadful consequences. It hinders the increase of a nation in general. It leaves the few children that proceed from these mixtures, abandoned to misery, uselessness and wickedness. It turns aside the minds of persons from beneficial and laudable employments to mean sensual pursuits. It encourages and increases the most dissolute and in every sense abandoned set of wretches in the world, common prostitutes, to their own miserable and early destruction;

tion; and that of multitudes of unwary youths, who would else have escaped. It debases the heart, by the influence of such vile and profligate company to vile and profligate ways of thinking and acting. It sometimes produces quarrels, that are immediately fatal: sometimes friendships, that are equally so, to every valuable purpose of life. It leads men to extravagance and profusion, grieves all that wish well, distresses those who are to support them, and drives them to the most criminal methods of supporting themselves. It tempts men to excesses and irregularities of every kind, wastes their health and strength, brings on them painful and opprobrious diseases, too often communicated to those, whom they afterwards marry; and to their miserable posterity, if they have any. By all these mischiefs, which for the most part come upon them in the beginning of their days, the remainder of them is made either *short or tedious*, perhaps both *. With great wisdom therefore doth Solomon exhort: *Remove thy way from the strange woman, and come not nigh the door of her house: lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: lest strangers be filled with thy wealth, and thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers. For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins* *.

It is very true, the sins of the flesh do not always produce all the bitter fruits which I have mentioned. But then such instances of them, as at first are imagined the safest, frequently prove extremely hurtful; or however intice persons on to worse, till they come at length to the most flagrant and pernicious. Very few, who transgress the scripture-bounds, ever stop at those lengths, which themselves, when they set out, thought the greatest that were defensible. Liberties taken by men before marriage, incline them to repeat the same liberties after marriage; and also to entertain the most injurious jealousies of good women, grounded on the knowledge which they have formerly had of bad ones. Their past successes embolden and incite them to new and more flagitious attempts: and by

* Wisd. ii. 1.

† Prov. v. 8,—13, 21, 22.

by appetites thus indulged, and habits contracted, they are carried on perpetually further and further, till they come to be guilty, and sometimes merely for the sake and the name of being guilty, of what they would once have trembled to hear proposed.

But supposing they keep within the limits of what they at first imagined to be allowable: is imagination (and reason, when biased by passions, is nothing better) the test of truth? Supposing their behaviour could be harmless otherwise, is not the example dangerous? Will or can the world around them take notice of all the pretended peculiarities that distinguish their case, and preserve it from being a sin, while other crimes, to which at first sight it is very like, are confessedly great ones? or will not all, who have bad inclinations or unsettled principles, take shelter under their practice, and either despise their refinements, or easily invent similar ones for their own use?

But further yet: if it be argued, that offences of this nature may by circumstances be rendered excusable, why not others also? why may not robbery, why may not murder be defended, by saying, that though undoubtedly in general they are very wrong, yet in such or such particular occurrences, there is on the whole very little hurt, or none at all, done by them, but perhaps good? And what would become of the human race, were such pleas admitted? The ends of government can be attained by no other than by plain, determinate, comprehensive laws, to be steadily observed: and no one's inclination, or fanciful theories, are to decide, when they bind, and when not: but deviations from them are criminal, if on no other account, yet because they are deviations: though differently criminal indeed according to their different degrees. Thus, in the matter before us, what approaches nearer to marriage is, ordinarily speaking, so far less blameable, than what is more distant from it: but nothing can be void of blame, and of great blame, that breaks the ordinances of God or man. For even the latter, if they oblige the conscience in any case, must oblige it in this, where public and private welfare is so essentially concerned. And as to the former, though sensual irregularities may suit very well with some sorts of superstition, yet their
incon-

inconsistence with any thing that deserves the name of religion, is confessed in effect by the persons guilty of them. For if some few such do hypocritically, in vain hope of concealment, keep on the appearance of it, yet who amongst them can preserve the reality of it? Offences of this kind, how plausibly soever palliated, yet, being committed against known prohibitions, wear out of the mind all reverence to God's commandments, all expectation of his future favour, nay, the very desire of spiritual happiness hereafter. And though many, who indulge in licentiousness, have notwithstanding very good qualities; yet, would they review their hearts and lives, they would find that they have much the fewer for it; and that those which remain are often made useless, often endangered, often perverted by it.

But the sins already mentioned, are by no means the only ones to be avoided in consequence of this commandment: whatever invites to them, whatever approaches towards them, whatever is contrary to decency and honour, whatever taints the purity of the mind, inflames the passions, and wears off the impressions of virtuous shame; all immodesty of appearance or behaviour; all entertainments, books, pictures, conversations, tending to excite or excuse the indulgence of irregular desires, are in their proportion prohibited and criminal. And unless we prudently guard against the smaller offences of this kind, the more heinous will be too likely to force their way: as our Lord very strongly warns us. *Ye have heard it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her in his heart* *. And though vicious inclinations were never to go further than the heart; yet if, instead of merely intruding against our will, they are designedly encouraged to dwell there, they corrupt the very fountain of spiritual life; and none but *the pure in heart shall see God* †.

All persons therefore should be very careful to turn their minds from forbidden objects, to fix their attention so constantly and steadily on useful and commendable employments, as to have no leisure for vices, and to govern themselves by such rules of temperance and prudence, that every sensual ap-

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petite

* Mat. v. 27, 28.

† Mat. v. 8.

petite may be kept in subjection to the dictates of reason and the laws of religion ; always remembering that Christianity both delivers to us the strictest precepts of holiness, and sets before us the strongest motives to it ; our peculiar relation to a holy God and Saviour ; our being *the temples of the Holy Ghost**, which *temple if any man defile, him will God destroy*† ; our being *pilgrims and strangers on earth*‡, not intended to have our portion here, but to inherit a spiritual happiness hereafter : and *every one that hath this hope, must purify himself even as God is pure*§. I shall conclude therefore with St Paul's exhortation : *Fornication, and all uncleanness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints ; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient : for this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words : for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them : walk as children of light, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*||.

* 1 Cor. vi. 19.

† 1 Cor. iii. 17.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 12.

§ 1 John iii. 3.

|| Eph. v. 3,—11.

LECTURE XXVI.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

UNDER the eighth commandment is comprehended our duty to our neighbour, in respect of his worldly substance. And, to explain it distinctly, I shall endeavour to show,

I. What it forbids : and,

II. What, by consequence, it requires.

I. As to the former. The wickedness of mankind hath invented ways to commit such an astonishing variety of sins against
this

this commandment, that it is impossible to reckon them up, and dreadful to think of them. But most, if not all of them, are so manifestly sins, that the least reflection is enough to make any one sensible, how much he is bound conscientiously to avoid them. And he, who desires to preserve himself innocent, easily may.

The most open and shameless crime, of this sort, is robbery; taking from another what is his, by force: which, adding violence against his person to invasion of his property, and making every part of human life unsafe, is a complicated transgression, of very deep guilt.

The next-degree is secret theft: privately converting to our own use what is not our own. To do this in matters of great value, is confessedly pernicious wickedness. And though it were only in what may seem a trifle; yet every man's right to the smallest part of what belongs to him is the same, as to the largest: and he ought no more to be wronged of one, than of the other. Besides, little instances of dishonesty cause great disquiet: make the sufferers distrustful of all about them; sometimes of those who are the farthest from deserving it: make them apprehensive continually, that some heavier injury will follow. And indeed almost all offenders begin with slight offences. More heinous ones would shock them at first; but if they once allow themselves in lesser faults; they go on without reluctance, by degrees, to worse and worse, till at last they scruple nothing. Always therefore beware of small sins. And always remember, what I have already observed to you, that when any thing is committed to your care and trust, to be dishonest in that, is peculiarly base.

But, besides what every body calls theft, there are many practices, which amount indirectly to much the same thing, however disguised in the world under gentler names. Thus, in the way of trade and business: if the seller puts off any thing for better than it is, by false assertions, or deceitful arts: if he takes advantage of the buyer's ignorance, or particular necessities, or good opinion of him, to insist on a larger price for it, than the current value; or if he gives less in quantity than he professes, or is understood to give: the frequency of some of these things cannot alter the nature of any of them: no one can be ignorant that they are wrong, but such as are wilfully or very carelessly ignorant: and the declara-

tion of scripture against the last of them is extended, in the same place, to every one of the rest. *Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small: thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the Lord thy God*.*

On the other hand: if the buyer takes advantage of his own wealth; and the poverty or present distress of the seller, to beat down the price of his merchandise beyond reason; or if he buys up the whole of a commodity, especially if it be a necessary one, to make immoderate gain of it; or if he refuses or neglects to pay for what he hath bought; or delays his payments beyond the time, within which, by agreement or the known course of traffic, they ought to be made: all such behaviour is downright injustice and breach of God's law. For the rule is, *If thou sellest ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not oppress one another†.*

Again, Borrowing on fraudulent securities, or false representations of our circumstances, or without intention, or without proper care afterwards to repay; preferring the gratification of our covetousness, our vanity, our voluptuousness, our indolence, before the satisfying of our just debts: all this is palpable wickedness. And just as bad is the contrary wickedness, of demanding exorbitant interest for lending to ignorant or thoughtless persons; or to extravagant ones, for carrying on their extravagance; or to necessitous ones, whose necessities it must continually increase, and make their ruin, after a while, more certain, more difficult to retrieve, and more hurtful to all with whom they are concerned. The scripture hath particularly forbidden it in the last case, and enjoined a very different sort of behaviour. *If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then shalt thou relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase; but fear thy God, that thy brother may dwell with thee‡.* And the Psalmist hath expressed the two opposite characters, on these occasions, very briefly and clearly. *The wicked borroweth,*
and

* Deut. xxv. 13,—16.

† Lev. xxv. 14.

‡ Lev. xxv. 35, &c.

and payeth not again : but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.*

Another crying iniquity is, when hired servants, labourers, or workmen of any sort, are ill used in their wages: whether by giving them too little; or, which is often full as bad, deferring it too long: The word of God forbids this last in very strong terms. *Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired, shall not abide with thee*, meaning, if demanded or wanted, *all night until the morning†*. *At his day shalt thou give him his hire; neither shall the sun go down upon it; for ‡ he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee §*. Nay, the son of Sirach carries it, with reason, (as I observed to you on the sixth commandment) further still. *The bread of the needy is their life: he that defraudeth the labourer of his hire, is a blood-shedder ||*.

But, besides all these instances of unrighteousness, there are many more that are frequent, in all kinds of contracts. Driving bargains, that we know are too hard; or insisting rigidly on the performance of them, after they appear to be so: making no abatements, when bad times, or unexpected losses, or other alterations of circumstances, call for them: not inquiring into the grounds of complaints, when there is a likelihood of their being just: throwing unreasonable burthens upon others, merely because they dare not refuse them: keeping them to the very words and letter of an agreement, contrary to the equitable intention of it; or, on the other hand, alledging some flaw and defect in form, to get loose from an agreement, which ought to have been strictly observed: all these things are grievous oppressions. And though some of them may not be in the least contrary to law, yet they are utterly irreconcilable with good conscience. Human laws cannot provide for all cases; and sometimes the vilest iniquities may be committed under their authority, and by their means.

It is therefore a further lamentable breach of this commandment, when one person puts another to the charge and hazard of law unjustly or needlessly; or, in ever so necessary a lawsuit,

* Psal. xxxvii. 21.

† Lev. xix. 13.

‡ For—or, when.

§ Deut. xxiv. 15.

|| Ecclus. xxxiv. 21, 22.

suit, occasions unnecessary expences, and contrives unfair delays: in short, when any thing is done by either party; by the counsel, that plead or advise in the cause, or by the Judge, who determines it, contrary to real justice and equity.

Indeed, when persons, by any means whatever, withhold from another his right; either keeping him ignorant of it, or forcing him to unreasonable cost or trouble to obtain it; this, in its proportion, is the same kind of injury with stealing from him. To see the rich and great, in these or any ways, bear hard upon the poor, is very dreadful: and truly it is little, if at all, less so, when the lower sort of people are unmerciful, as they are but too often, one to another. For, as Solomon observes, *A poor man that oppresseth the poor, is like a sweeping rain, which leaveth no food* *. But suppose it be a person ever so wealthy, that is wronged; still his wealth is his own, and no one can have more right to take the least part of it from him, without his consent, than to rob the meanest wretch in the world. Suppose it be a body or number of men; suppose it to be the government, the public, that is cheated; be it of more or less, be it of so little as not to be sensibly missed; let the guilt be divided amongst ever so many; let the practice be ever so common; still it is the same crime, however it may vary in degrees: and the rule is without exception, that *no man go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter* †.

It surely scarce needs to be added, that whatever things it is unlawful to do, it is also unlawful to advise, encourage, help, or protect others in doing: that buying, receiving, or concealing stolen goods, knowing them to be such, is becoming a partner in the stealth: and that being any way a patron, assistant, or tool of injustice, is no less evidently wrong, than being the immediate and principal agent in it.

And as the wrongness of all these things is very plain, so is the folly of them. Common robbers and thieves are the most miserable set of wretches upon earth: in perpetual danger, perpetual frights and alarms; obliged to support their spirits by continual excesses, which, after the gay madness of a few hours, depress them to the most painful lowness: confined to the most hateful and hellish society; very soon, generally speaking, betrayed by their dearest companions, or hunted out by vigilant

* Prov. xxviii. 3.

† 1 Thess. iv. 6.

vigilant officers; then shut up in horror, condemned to open shame, if not to an untimely death; and the more surely undone for ever in the next life, the more insensible they are of their sufferings and their sins in this.

Nor do they, of whose guilt the law can take little or no cognizance, escape a heavy and bitter self-condemnation from time to time; nor usually the bad opinion of the world; which last alone will frequently do them more harm, than any unfair practices will do them good. But especially this holds in the middle and lower, which is vastly the larger part of mankind. Their livelihood depends chiefly on their character; and their character depends on their honesty. This will make amends for the want of many other defects. Deceitful craft may seem perhaps a shorter method of gain, than uprightness and diligence. But they who get wickedly, spend, for the most part, foolishly, perhaps wickedly too: and so all that stays by them is their guilt. Or let them be ever so cunning, and appear for a while to thrive ever so fast; yet remember the sayings of the wise king: *An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed**. *Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death†*. *Wealth, gotten by vanity, shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour, shall increase‡*. Or, should the prosperity of persons, who raise themselves by ill means, last as long as their lives; yet their lives may be cut short. For what the Prophet threatens, often comes to pass, and is always to be feared: *He that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool§*. But should his days on earth be extended to the utmost; yet *the sinner, an hundred years old shall be accursed||*. For *the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God¶*: but *the Lord is the avenger of all such**.

Let every one therefore consider seriously, in the first place, what this commandment forbids; and abstain from it. Tho' he fare more hardly; though he lay up less; though he be despised for his conscientiousness, provided it be a reasonable one; surely it is well worth while to bear these things, rather than injure our fellow-creatures, and offend our Maker.

But

* Prov. xx. 21. † Prov. x. 2. ‡ Prov. xiii. 11. § Jer. xvii. 11

|| Isa. lxy. 20. ¶ 1 Cor. vi. 9. * 1 Thess. iv. 6.

But let us now proceed to consider,

II. What the commandment before us, by consequence, requires. And,

1. It requires restitution of whatever we have, at any time, unjustly taken or detained. For, that being in right not our own, but another's; keeping it is continuing and carrying on the injustice. Therefore the Prophet Ezekiel makes it an express condition of forgiveness: *If the wicked restore the pledge, and give again that he had robbed; then he shall surely live, he shall not die* *. Nor was it till Zaccheus had engaged to restore amply what he had extorted from any one, that our Saviour declared, *This day is salvation come to this house* †. So that to think of raising wealth by fraud, and then growing honest, is the silliest scheme in the world: for till we have returned, or offered to return, as far as we can, all that we have gotten by fraud, we are not honest. Nay, suppose we have spent and squandered it, still we remain debtors for it. Nay, suppose we got nothing, by any wicked contrivances, in which we have been concerned; yet if we have caused another's loss, any loss for which money is a proper compensation; what we ought never to have done, we ought to undo as soon and as completely as we are able, however we straiten ourselves by it; otherwise we come short of making the amends, which may justly be expected from us: and, while so important a part of repentance is wanting, to demonstrate the sincerity of the rest, we cannot hope to be accepted with God.

2. This commandment also requires industry: without which, the generality of persons cannot maintain themselves honestly. Therefore St Paul directs: *Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him* (and certainly, by consequence, every one else that needs) *labour, working with his hands the thing which is good* ‡. And each of them is to labour, not only for himself, but his family also, if he hath one: both for their present, and, if possible, their future maintenance, in case of sickness, accidents, or old age. For as they who belong to him, have, both by nature and by law, a claim to support from him, if they need it, and he can give it; neglecting to make due provision for them is wronging them; and throwing either them or himself upon others, when he may avoid it, or
however

* Ezek. xxxiii. 15.

† Luke xix. 8, 9.

‡ Eph. iv. 28.

however might have avoided it by proper diligence, is wronging others. For which reason the same apostle commanded likewise, *that if any one would not work, neither should he eat**.

In order to be just therefore, be industrious: and doubt not but you will find it, after a while at least, by much the most comfortable, as well as Christian, way of getting a livelihood. It is a way, that no one ought to think beneath him. For *better is he that laboureth, and aboundeth in all things, than he that boasteth himself, and wanteth bread*†. It is the best preservative that can be, from bad company and bad courses. It procures the good will and good word of mankind. It exempts persons from the contempt and reproach of which those have bitter experience, who make a dependent state their choice. *Begging is sweet in the mouth of the shameless: but in his belly there shall burn a fire*‡. Very different from this is the case of the industrious. Their minds are at ease: their bodies are usually healthy: their time is employed as they know it should: what they get, they enjoy with a good conscience, and it wears well. Nor do only the fruits of their labour delight them: but even labour itself becomes pleasant to them.

And though persons of higher condition are not bound to *work with their hands*, yet they also must be diligent in other ways: in the business of their offices and professions; or if they have none, yet in the care of their families and affairs. Else the former will be ill-governed, wicked and miserable: and the latter soon run into such disorder, as will almost force them, either to be unjust to their creditors, and those for whom Nature binds them to provide; or to be guilty of mean and dishonourable actions of more kinds than one, to avoid these and other disagreeable consequences of their supineness. Besides, as the upper part of the world are peculiarly destined by Providence to be in one way or another extensively useful in society: such of them as are not, defraud it of the service they owe it, and therefore break this commandment. But,

3. To observe it well, frugality must be joined with industry: else it will be all labour in vain. For unwise expensiveness will dissipate whatever the utmost diligence can acquire. But if idleness be added to extravagance, that brings on quick ruin. And if intemperance and debauchery go along with

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them,

* 2 Thess. iii. 10.

† Eccles. x. 27.

‡ Eccles. xl. 30.

them, the case is then come to its extremity. Every one therefore, who desires to approve himself honest, should be careful to live within the bounds of his income, so as to have something in readiness against the time of inability and unforeseen events. But they who have, or design to have families, should endeavour to live a good deal within those bounds. And whoever spends upon himself, or throws away upon any other person or thing, more than he can prudently afford, (whatever false names of praise, as elegance, generosity, goodness, may be given to this indiscretion) will be led, before he is aware, to distress himself, perhaps many more; and be too probably driven at last to repair, as well as he can, by wickedness, the breaches, which he hath made by folly.

4. This commandment requires in the last place, that we neither deny ourselves, or those who belong to us, what is fit for our and their station, which is one kind of robbery; nor omit to relieve the poor according to our ability, which is another kind. For whatever we enjoy of worldly plenty is given us in trust, that we should take our own share with moderation, and distribute out of the remainder with liberality. And as they who have but little, will, most or all of them, at one time or another, find those who have less; very few, if any, are exempted from giving some alms. And whoever either penuriously or thoughtlessly neglects his proper share of this duty, is unjust to his Maker and his fellow-creatures too. For the *good*, which God hath placed in our hands for the poor, is undoubtedly, as the scripture declares it, *their due*. He hath given them no right to seize it: but he hath bound us not to *with-hold* * it from them.

And now, having finished the two heads proposed, I shall only add, that by observing these directions from a principle of Christian faith; and teaching all under our care to observe them from the same; the poor in this world may be *rich towards God* †: and the rich may *treasure up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come*, which will enable them to *lay hold on eternal life* ‡.

‡ * Prov. iii. 27. † Luke xii. 21. ‡ 1 Tim. vi. 19.

L E C T U R E XXVII.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

THE Ninth Commandment is connected with every one of the four, which precede it. For neither the duties of superiors and inferiors, nor those amongst equals, could be tolerably practised; neither the lives of men, nor their happiness in the nearest relation of life, nor their possessions and properties could ever be secure; if they were left exposed to those injuries of a licentious tongue, which are here prohibited. This commandment therefore was intended, partly to strengthen the foregoing ones; and partly also, to make provision for every person's just character on its own account, as well as for the sake of consequences. For, independently on these, we have by nature (and with reason) a great concern about our reputations. And therefore the precept, *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour*, is, in all views, of much importance.

The crime, at which these words principally and most expressly point, is, giving false evidence in any cause or trial. And as, in such cases, evidence hath always been given upon oath; this commandment so far is the same with the third: only there, perjury is forbidden, as impiety against God; here, as injurious to men. Now we are guilty of this sin, if, in bearing witness, we affirm that we know or believe any thing, which we do not; or deny that we know or believe any thing, which we do; or either affirm or deny more positively, than we have good grounds. Nay, if we only stifle, by our silence, any fact, which is material, though we are not examined particularly about it; still when we have sworn in general to speak the whole truth, we bear false witness, if we designedly avoid it; especially after being asked, if we are able to say any thing besides, relative to the point in question. For hiding a truth may as totally mislead those who are to judge, as telling an untruth. Indeed, if by any means whatever we disguise the real state of the case, instead of relating it in the fairest and plainest manner that we can: we evidently transgress the in-

tent of this commandment. And by doing it, the good name, the property, the livelihood, the life of an innocent person may be taken away ; the advantages of society defeated, nay, perverted into mischiefs, and the very bonds of it dissolved. Therefore the rule of the Mosaic law is: *If a false witness rise up against any man, and testify against his brother that which is wrong ; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother, and thine eye shall not pity* *. With us indeed, the punishment extends not so far. But however mild such persons may find the penalties of human laws to be, or how artfully soever they may evade them ; God hath declared: *A false witness shall not be unpunished : and he that speaketh lies shall not escape* †.

The commandment saith only, that we shall not bear false witness *against* our neighbour: but in effect it binds us equally not to bear false witness for him. For in all trials of property, bearing witness for one party is bearing witness against the other. And in all trials for crimes, false evidence, to the advantage of the person accused, is to the disadvantage and ruin of right and truth, of public safety and peace ; by concealing and encouraging what ought to be detected and punished.

It being thus criminal to bear false witness ; it must be criminal also to draw persons into the commission of so great a sin, by gifts, or promises, or threatenings, or any other method. And, in its degree, it must be criminal to bring a false accusation, or false action against any one ; or to make any sort of demand, for which there is no reasonable ground.

Nay further, however favourably persons are apt to think of the defendant's side ; yet to defend ourselves against justice, or even to delay it by unfair methods, is very wicked. For it ought to take place ; and the sooner the better. Still, both the professors of the law, and others, may unquestionably say and do, for a doubtful or a bad cause, whatever can be said with truth, or done with equity ; for otherwise it might be thought still worse than it is ; and treated worse than it deserves. But if they do, in any cause, what in reason ought not to be done ; if they use or suggest indirect methods of defeating the intent of the law ; if, by false colours and glosses, by
terrifying

* Deut. xix. 16,—21.

† Prov. x. 5.

terrifying or confounding witnesses, by calumniating or ridiculing the adverse party, they endeavour to make justice itself an instrument for patronizing injustice; this is *turning judgment into gall*, as the scripture expresses it, *and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock* *.

But in a still higher degree is it so, if judges or jurymen are influenced, in giving their sentence or verdict, by interest, relation, friendship, hatred, compassion, party; by any thing, but the nature of the case, as it fairly appears to them. For designedly making a false determination, is compleating all the mischief, which bearing false witness only attempts. And, in a word, whoever any way promotes what is wrong, or obstructs what is right, partakes in the same sin: be it either of the parties, their evidences or agents: be it the highest magistrate, or the lowest officer.

But persons may break this commandment, not only in judicial proceedings; but, often full as grievously, in common discourse: by raising, spreading, or countenancing false reports against others; or such, as they have no sufficient cause to think true; which is the case, in part at least, of most reports: by misrepresenting their circumstances in the world to their prejudice; or speaking, without foundation, to the disadvantage of their persons, understandings, accomplishments, temper, or conduct; whether charging them with faults and imperfections, which do not belong to them; or taking from them good qualities and recommendations, which do; or aggravating the former, or diminishing the latter: determining their characters from a single bad action or two; fixing ill names on things which are really virtuous or innocent in them; imputing their laudable behaviour to blameable or worthless motives: making no allowance for the depravity or weakness of human nature, strength of temptation, want of instruction, wicked insinuations, vicious examples. And in all these ways, persons may be injured, either by open public assertions; or more dangerously perhaps, by secret whispers, which they have no opportunity of contradicting. The scandal may be accompanied with strong expressions of hoping it is not true, or being very sorry for it; and warm declarations of great good will to the party, whom it concerns; all which may serve only to give it

* Amos vi. 12.

it a more unsuspected credit. Nay, it may be conveyed very effectually in dark hints, expressive gestures, or even affected silence. And these, as they may be equally mischievous, are not less wicked, for being more cowardly and more artful methods of defamation.

Further yet: Speaking or intimating things to any person's disadvantage, though they be true, is seldom innocent. For it usually proceeds from bad principles: Revenge, envy, malice, pride, censoriousness; unfair zeal for some private or party interest; or, at best, from desire of appearing to know more than others, or mere impertinent fondness of talking. Now these are wretched motives for publishing what will be hurtful to one of our brethren. Sometimes indeed bad characters and bad actions ought to be known: but much oftner not, or not to all the world, or not by our means. And we have need to be very careful from what inducements we act in such a case. Sometimes again things are known already; or soon will be known, let us be ever so silent about them: and then to be sure, we are more at liberty. But even then, to take pleasure in relating the faults of others is by no means right. And to reveal them, when they can be hid, unless a very considerable reason require it, is extremely wrong.

Indeed we should be cautious, not only what harm, but what good we say of others. For speaking too highly of their characters or circumstances, or praising them in any respect beyond truth, is *bearing false witness* about them, which may sometimes turn against them: and may often mislead those, to whom we exalt them thus; and produce grievously bad consequences of many kinds. But the other is much the more common, and usually the more hurtful extreme.

We all think it an injury, in the tenderest part, when bad impressions are made on others concerning us; and therefore should conscientiously avoid doing the same injury to others. Making them designedly, without cause, is inexcusable wickedness. And even where we intend no harm, we may do a great deal. Whatever hurts, in any respect, the reputation of persons, always gives them great pain, and often doth them great prejudice, even in their most important concerns. For indeed almost every thing in this world depends on character. And when

when once that hath suffered an imputation; for the most part, neither the persons calumniated, be they ever so innocent, can recover it completely by their own endeavours, nor the persons who have wronged them, be they ever so desirous, restore it fully to its former state: though certainly they, who rob others of their good name, or even without design asperse it, are full as much bound to make restitution for that, as for any other damage, which they cause. But were they not to hurt at all the person against whom they speak, still they hurt themselves, and lessen their power of doing good in the world; they often hurt their innocent families by the provocations which they give; they grieve their friends; they set a mischievous example in society; and, if they profess any religion, bring a dreadful reproach upon it, by a temper and behaviour so justly hateful to mankind.

It will easily be understood, that, next to the raisers and spreaders of ill reports, they who encourage persons of that kind, by hearkening to them with pleasure, and by readiness of belief in what they say, contradict the intention of this commandment. Indeed we ought, far from countenancing scandal and detraction, to express, in all proper ways, our dislike of it: shew the uncertainty, the improbability, the falsehood, if we can, of injurious rumours; oppose the divulging even of truths that are uncharitable; and set a pattern of giving every one his just praise.

It must now be observed further, that though undoubtedly those falsehoods are the worst, which hurt others the most directly, yet falsehoods in general are hurtful and wrong. And therefore lying; all use either of words or actions of known settled import, with purpose to deceive; is unlawful. And those offences of this kind, which may seem the most harmless, have yet commonly great evil in them. Lying destroys the very end of speech, and leads us into perpetual mistakes, by the very means which God intended should lead us into truth. It puts an end to all the pleasure, all the benefit, all the safety of conversation. Nobody can know, on what or whom to depend. For if one person may lie, why not another? and at this rate, no justice can be done, no wickedness be prevented or punished, no business go forward. All these mischiefs will equally follow, whether untruths be told in a
gross

gross barefaced manner, or disguised under equivocations, quibbles, and evasions. The sin therefore is as great in one case as the other. And it is so great in both, that no sufficient excuses can ever be made for it in either, though several are often pleaded.

Many persons imagine, that, when they have committed a fault, it is very pardonable to conceal it under a lie. But some faults ought not to be concealed at all; and none by this method; which is committing two, instead of one; and the second not uncommonly worse than the first. And ingenuous confession will be likely, in most cases, to procure an easy pardon: but a lie is a monstrous aggravation of an offence; and persisting in a lie can very hardly be forgiven. But, above all, if any persons, to hide what they have done amiss themselves, are so vile as to throw the blame or the suspicion of it upon another; this is the height of wickedness. And therefore particularly all children and servants, who are chiefly tempted to excuse themselves by telling falsehoods, ought to undergo any thing, rather than be guilty of such a sin. And, on the other hand, all parents, masters, and mistresses, ought to beware of punishing them too severely for their other offences; lest they drive them into a habit of this terrible one.

Some again plead for making free with truth, that they do it only in jest. But these jests of theirs often occasion great uneasiness and disquiet; and sometimes other very serious bad consequences. The scripture therefore hath passed a severe censure upon them. *As a madman, who casteth fire-brands, arrows, and death; so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am I not in sport*?* To give another person vexation, or make him appear contemptible, though in a slight instance, is by no means innocent sport. And besides, to speak falsehood on any occasion is a dangerous introduction to speaking it on more, if not all, occasions. For if so trifling a motive as a jest will prevail on us to violate truth, how can we be expected to withstand more weighty temptations?

However, it may perhaps at least be thought, that lying, to prevent mischief and do good, must be permitted. But the scripture expressly forbids us to *do evil, that good may come†*. And they, who allow themselves in it, will usually be discovered

* Prov. xxvi. 19.

† Rom. iii. 8.

vered and lose their end: or, if not, will never know where to stop. They will be enticed by degrees to think every thing good, that serves their turn, let others think it ever so bad: those others again will think themselves authorized by such examples to take the same liberties: and thus all trust and probity will be lost amongst men: a much greater evil, than any good, which falsehood may do now and then, will ever compensate.

And if telling lies, even from these plausible inducements, be so bad; what must it be, when they proceed from less excusable ones, as desire of promoting our own interest, or that of our party: and how completely detestable, when we are prompted to them by malice, or undue resentment, or any other totally wicked principle!

Nor is the practice less imprudent, than it is unlawful. Some indeed lie to raise their characters, as others do to gain their points. But both act very absurdly. For they miss of their purpose entirely, as soon as they are found out: and all liars are found out; immediately, for the most part; but in a while without fail. And after that, every body despises and hates them: even when they speak truth, nobody knows how to credit them: and so, by aiming wickedly at some little advantage for the present, they put themselves foolishly under the greatest disadvantage in the world ever after. *The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment* *. Beware then of the least beginning of a practice that will be sure to end ill. For if you venture upon falsehood at all, it will grow upon you, and entangle you; and bring you to shame, to punishment, to ruin. And, besides what you will suffer by it here, your portion, unless you repent very deeply, and amend very thoroughly, will be with the father of lies hereafter. For *into the heavenly Jerusalem shall in no wise enter whosoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie* †. *Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly, are his delight* ‡.

There is yet another sort of falsehood, often full as bad as affirming what we do not think: I mean, promising what we do not intend; or what we neglect afterwards to perform, so soon, or so fully, as we ought. Whoever hath promised, hath

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made

* Prov. xii. 19, 22.

† Rev. xxi. 27.

‡ Prov xii. 22.

made himself a debtor: and, unless he be punctual in his payment, commits an injustice; which in many cases may be of very pernicious consequence.

Now, in order to secure this great point of speaking truth: besides considering carefully and frequently the before-mentioned evils of departing from it, we should be attentive also to moderate the quantity of our discourse, lest we fall into falsehood unawares. For *in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise* *. Persons, who suffer themselves to run on heedlessly in talk, just as their present humour disposes them, or the present company will be best pleased; or who will say almost any thing, rather than say nothing; must be perpetually transgressing some of the duties comprehended under this commandment; which yet it is of the utmost importance not to transgress. For, with respect to the concerns of this world, *He that loveth life, and would see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile* †. And, as to our eternal state in the next, *If any man seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain* ‡.

* Prov. x. 19. † Psal. xxxiv. 12, 13. ‡ James i. 26.

LECTURE XXVIII.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

WE are now come to the tenth and last commandment; which is by the Church of Rome absurdly divided into two, to keep up the number, after joining the first and second into one, contrary to ancient authority, Jewish and Christian. How the mistake was originally made, is hard to say: but undoubtedly they retain and defend it the more earnestly, in order to pass over the second commandment, as only part of the first, without any distinct meaning of its own. And
accordingly

accordingly many of their devotional books omit it entirely. But that these two ought not to be thus joined and confounded, I have shown you already. And that this now before us, ought not to be divided, it is extremely evident: for it is one single prohibition of all unjust desires. And if reckoning up the several prohibited objects of desire makes it more than one commandment; for the same reason it will be more than two. For there are six things forbidden in it particularly, besides all the rest, that are forbidden in general. And, moreover, if this be two commandments, which is the first of them? For in Exodus it begins, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house*: but in Deuteronomy, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*. And accordingly some of their books of devotion make the former, some the latter of these, the ninth*. Surely the order of the words would never have been changed thus in scripture, had there been two commandments in them†: but being one, it is no way material, which part is named first. I say no more therefore on so clear a point: but proceed to explain this precept, of *not coveting what is our neighbour's*.

The good things of this life being the gifts of God, for which all are to be thankful to him; desiring, with due moderation and submission, a comfortable share of them, is very natural and right. Wishing, that our share were better, is, in the case of many persons, so far from a sin, that endeavouring diligently to make it better is part of their duty. Wishing it were equal to that of such another, is not wishing ill to

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him,

* Their Manual of Prayers in English, 1725, puts, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*, for the ninth. But in the Office of the Virgin, both Latin and English, called the Primer, 1717, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house*, is the ninth.

† Indeed the Vatican Copy of the Septuagint in Exodus places, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, before *Thou shalt do no murder*. And so do Mark x. 19. Luke xviii. 20. Rom. xiii. 9. and Philo, and part of the fathers. But the Hebrew and Samaritan, and all translations, excepting the Septuagint, and even that in Deuteronomy, and I believe most copies of it in Exodus, and Matth. xix. 18. and Josephus, and another part of the fathers, keep the now common order. And the Evangelists did not intend to observe the original order: for they put, *Honour thy father*, &c. last. And St Paul doth not say, that he intended to observe it. This therefore is not a parallel case to that of the tenth commandment.

him, but only well to ourselves. And seeking to obtain what belongs to another may, in proper circumstances, be perfectly innocent. We may really have occasion for it; he may be well able to bestow it; or he may have occasion for something of ours in return. And on these mutual wants of men all commerce and trade is founded: which God, without question, designed should be carried on; because he hath made all countries abound in some things, and left them deficient in others.

Not every sort of desires therefore, but unfit and immoderate desires only, are forbidden by the words, *Thou shalt not covet*. And these are such as follow: First, If our neighbour cannot lawfully part with his property, nor we lawfully receive it: and yet we want to have it. One instance of this kind is expressed, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*. Another is, if we want a person who possesses any thing in trust, or under certain limitations, to give or sell it in breach of that trust or those limitations. Or if he can part with it, but is not willing; and we entertain thoughts of acquiring it by force or fraud; or of being revenged on him for his refusal; this also is highly blameable: for why should not he be left quietly free master of his own? Indeed, barely pressing and importuning persons, contrary to their interest, or even their inclinations only, is in some degree wrong: for it is one way of extorting things from them; or however, of giving them trouble, where we have no right to give it.

But though we keep our desires ever so much to ourselves, they may notwithstanding be very sinful. And such they are particularly, if they induce us to envy others: that is, to be uneasy at their imagined superior happiness, to wish them ill, or take pleasure in any harm which befalls them. For this turn of mind will prompt us to do them ill, if we can: as indeed a great part of the mischief that is done in the world, and some of the worst of it, arises from hence. *Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous: but who is able to stand against envy**? Accordingly, we find it joined in the New Testament with *strife, railing, variance, sedition, murder, confusion, and every evil work*†. But were it to produce no mischief to our neighbour,

* Prov. xxvii. 4. † Rom. i. 29. xiii. 13. 1 Cor. iii. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 20. Gal. v. 20, 21. 1 Tim. vi. 4. Jamiii. 14, 16.

bour, yet it is the directly opposite disposition to that love of him, which is the second great precept of Christ's religion. Nay, indeed it deserves, in some respects, to be reckoned the worst of ill-natured sins. The revengeful man pleads for himself some injury attempted against him: but the envious person bears unprovoked malice to those, who have done him neither wrong nor harm, solely because he fancies them to be, in this or that instance, very happy. And why should they not, if they can; as he certainly would, if he could? For the prosperity of bad people, it must be confessed, we have reason to be so far sorry, as they are likely to do hurt by it. But to desire their fall, rather than their amendment; to desire what may be grievous to any persons, not from good will to mankind, but from ill-will to them; to wish any misfortune even to our competitors and rivals, merely because they are such; or because they have succeeded, and enjoyed what we aimed at; is extremely uncharitable and inhuman. It is a temper that will give us perpetual disquiet in this world, (for there will always be somebody to envy) and bring a heavy sentence upon us in the next, unless we repent of it, and subdue it first.

But though our selfish desires were to raise in us no malignity against our fellow-creatures; yet if they tempt us to murmur against our Creator; and either to speak or think ill of that distribution of things, which his providence hath made; this is great impiety, and rebellion of the heart against God: who hath an absolute right to dispose of the works of his hands as he pleases; and uses it always both with justice and with goodness to us. Were we innocent, we could none of us demand more advantages of any sort, than he thought fit to give us: but as we are guilty wretches; far from having a claim to this or that degree of happiness, we are every one liable to severe punishment. And therefore, with the many comforts and blessings which we have now, and the eternal felicity which, through the mercy of our heavenly Father, the merits of our blessed Redeemer, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, we may, if we will, have hereafter; surely we have no ground to complain of our condition. For what if things be unequally divided here? We may be certain the Disposer of them hath wise reasons for it, whether we can see them or not: and we may be as certain, that, unless it be our own fault, we shall
be

be no losers by it: for *all things work together for good to them that love God* *. Therefore, how little soever we enjoy, we have cause to be thankful for it: and how much soever we suffer, we have cause to be resigned; nay, thankful too, even for that; as we may be happier in this world for many of our sufferings; and shall, if we bear them as we ought, be improved in goodness by them all, and made happier to eternity.

But further yet: though we may not be conscious of what we shall study to hide from ourselves, that our desires carry us, either to behave or wish ill to our neighbours, or to repine against God: still, if they disturb and agitate our minds; if we are eager and vehement about the objects of them; we are not arrived at the state, in which we should be found.

Some feeling of this inward tumult, especially on trying occasions, may be unavoidable by fallen man; and more of it natural to one person than another: but after all, it is voluntary indulgence, that gives our appetites, and passions, and fancies, the far greatest share of their dominion. We inflame them, when else they would be moderate: we affect things, for which we have really no liking, merely because they are fashionable: we create imaginary wants to ourselves; and then grow as earnest for what we might do perfectly well without, as if the whole of our felicity consisted in it. This is a very immoral state of mind; and hurries persons, almost irresistably, into as immoral a course of life. In proportion as worldly inclinations of any kind engage the heart, they exclude from it social affection, compassion, generosity, integrity; and yet more effectually love to God, and attention to the concerns of our future state. Nor do they almost ever fail to make us at present miserable, as well as wicked. They prey upon our spirits, torment us with perpetual self-dillike, waste our health, sink our character, drive us into a thousand foolish actions to gratify them; and, when all is done, can never be gratified, so as to give us any lasting satisfaction. First, we shall be full of anxieties and fears: when we have got over these and obtained our wish, we shall quickly find it comes very short of our expectation: then we shall be cloyed, and tired,

* Rom. viii. 28.

red, and wretchedly languid, till some new craving sets us on work to as little purpose as the former did; or till we are wise enough to see, that such pursuits are not the way to happiness.

But supposing persons are not violent in pursuing the imagined good things of this world; yet if they be dejected and grieved, that no more of them have fallen to their lot; if they mourn over the inferiority of their condition, and live in a perpetual feeling of affliction (be it ever so calm) on that account; or indeed on account of any cross, or disadvantage whatever, belonging to the present life: this also is a degree, tho' the lowest and least, yet still a degree, of inordinate desire. For we are not grateful, if, instead of taking our portion of happiness here with cheerfulness, and due acknowledgements for it, we only lament, that it is not, in this or that respect, more considerable: and we are not wise, if we embitter it, be it ever so small, by a fruitless sorrow, instead of making the best of it.

These then being the excesses, which this commandment forbids; the duty, which of course it requires, is, that we *learn*, like St Paul, *in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content* *. This virtue every body practises in some cases: for who is there, that could not mention several things which he should be glad to have, yet is perfectly well satisfied to go without them? And would we but strive to be of the same disposition in all cases; the self-enjoyment that we should reap from it, is inexpressible. The worldly condition of multitudes is really quite as good as it needs to be; and of many others (who do not think so) as good as it well can be. Now for such to be anxious about mending it, is only being miserable for nothing. And in whatever we may have cause to wish our circumstances were better, moderate wishes will be sufficient to excite a reasonable industry to improve them, as far as we can: and immoderate eagerness will give us no assistance, but only disquiet. More than a few consume themselves with longing for what indolence and despondency will not suffer them to try if they can obtain. *The desire of the slothful killeth him: for his hands refuse to labour* †. And sometimes, on the contrary, the precipitance, with which we

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* Phil. iv. 11.

† Prov. xxi. 25.

aim at a favourite point, is the very reason that we overshoot the mark, and miss it.

But supposing the most solicitous were always the most likely to gain their ends : yet this likelihood will be often crossed, both by delays and disappointments ; which to impatient tempers will be extremely grievous : and the saddest disappointment of all will be, that they will find the most perfect accomplishment of their wishes, after a very small time, to be little or no increase of their happiness. Persons uneasy in their present situation, or intent on some darling object, imagine, that could they but succeed in such a pursuit, or had they but such a person's good fortune or accomplishments, then they should be perfectly at ease, and lastingly delighted. But they utterly mistake. Every enjoyment palls and deadens quickly : every condition hath its unseen inconveniencies and sufferings, as well as its visible advantages. And happiness depends scarce at all on the pre-eminence commonly admired. For the noble, the powerful, the rich, the learned, the ingenious, the beautiful, the gay, the voluptuous, are usually to the full as far from it, and by turns own they are, as any of the wretches, whom they severally despise. Indeed, when every thing is tried round, we shall experience at last, what we had much better see at first, as we easily may, that the chearful composure of a reasonable and religious, and therefore contented, mind, is the only solid felicity that this world affords ; the great blessing of Heaven here below ; that will enable us to relish the rest, if we have them ; and to be satisfied, if we have them not. What Solomon hath said of wealth, he found to be equally true of every thing else beneath the sun. *God giveth to a man, that is good in his sight, wisdom, and knowledge, and joy : but to the sinner he giveth travel, to gather and heap up.— This also is vanity, and vexation of spirit* *.

Contentment therefore being the gift of God, we should earnestly pray to him for it. And, in order to become fit objects of his favour, we should frequently and thankfully recollect the many undeserved comforts of our condition, that we may bear the afflictions of it more patiently ; reasoning with Job, *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil* † ? Nor should we fail to join with our meditations

on

* Eccl. ii. 26.

† Job ii. 10.

On his past and present mercies, the firm assurance, which both his attributes and his promises furnish, that the same *loving kindness shall follow us all the days of our life* *; and be exerted, though sometimes for our correction or trial, yet always for our benefit; and so as to make our lot supportable in every variety of outward circumstances. *Let your conversation, therefore, be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee* †. Another very important consideration, and necessary to be often brought to mind, is, that the season both of enjoying the advantages, and bearing the inconveniencies, of life is short: but the reward of enjoying and bearing each, as we ought, is eternal and inconceivably great.

Together with these reflections, let us exercise a steady care to check every faulty inclination in its earliest rise. For it is chiefly indulging them at first, that makes them so hard to conquer afterwards. And yet we shall always find the bad consequences of yielding to outweigh vastly the trouble of resisting: and that to bring our desires, when they are the strongest, down to our condition, is a much easier work, than to raise our condition up to our desires, which will only grow the more ungovernable, the more they are pampered. Further: whatever share we possess of worldly plenty, let us bestow it on ourselves with decent moderation, and impart of it to others with prudent liberality: for thus *knowing how to abound*, we shall *know the better how to suffer need* ‡, if Providence calls us to it. And lastly, instead of *setting our affections on any things on earth* §, which would be a fatal neglect of the great end, that we are made for, let us exalt our views to that blessed place, where *godliness with contentment will be unspeakable gain* ||: and they who have restrained the inferior principles of their nature by the rules of religion, shall have the highest faculties of their souls *abundantly satisfied with the fatness of God's house, and be made to drink of the river of his pleasures* ¶.

Thus then you see both the meaning and the importance of this last commandment: which is indeed the guard and security of all the preceding ones. For our actions will never be

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right

* Psal. xxiii. 6. † Heb. xiii. 5. ‡ Phil. iv. 12. § Col. iii. 2.

|| 1 Tim. vi. 6. ¶ Psal. xxxvi. 8.

right habitually, till our desires are so. Or if they could, our Maker demands the whole man, as he surely well may: nor till that is devoted to him, are we *meet for the inheritance of the saints of light* *.

And now, both the first and the second table of the ten commandments having been explained to you, it only remains, that we beg of God *sufficient grace* † to keep them; earnestly entreating him in the words of his church: *Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech thee.*

* Col. i. 12.

† 2 Cor. xii. 9.

LECTURE XXIX.

Of Man's Inability, God's grace, and Prayer to Him for it.

I Have now proceeded, in the course of these Lectures, to the end of the commandments; and explained the nature of that repentance, faith and obedience, which were promised for us in our baptism, and which we are bound to exercise, in proportion as we come to understand the obligations incumbent on us. You cannot but see by this time, that the duties, which God enjoins us, are not only very important, but very extensive. And therefore a consideration will almost unavoidably present itself to your minds in the next place, what abilities we have to perform them. Now this question our catechism decides, without asking it, by a declaration, extremely discouraging in appearance; that *we are not able of ourselves, to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve him.*

Indeed, had we ever so great abilities, we must have them not of ourselves, but of our Maker: from whom all the pow-

ers of all creatures are derived. But something further than this, is plainly meant here: that there are no powers, belonging to human nature in its present state, sufficient for so great a purpose. *The law of God is spiritual, but we are carnal, sold under sin* *. And that such is our condition, will appear by reflecting, first, what it was at our birth; Secondly, what we have made it since.

1. As to the first: We all give proofs, greater or less of an inbred disorder and wrongness in our understandings, will and affections. Possibly one proof, that some may give of it, may be a backwardness to own it. But they little consider, how severe a sentence they would pass, by denying it, on themselves, and all mankind. Even with our natural bad inclinations for some excuse, we are blameable enough for the ill things that we do. But how much more should we be so, if we did them all, without the solicitation of any inward depravity to plead afterwards in our favour? In point of interest therefore, as well as truth, we are concerned to admit an original proneness to evil in our frame: while yet reason plainly teaches, at the same time, that whatever God created was originally, in its kind, perfect and good.

To reconcile these two things would have been a great difficulty, had not revelation pointed out the way, by informing us, that *man* was indeed *made upright* †, but that the very first of human race lost their innocence and their happiness together; and tainting, by wilful transgression, their own nature, tainted, by consequence, that of their whole posterity. Thus *by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned* ‡. We find in fact, however difficult it may be to account for it in speculation, that the dispositions of parents, both in body and mind, very commonly descend, in some degree, to their children. And therefore it is entirely credible, that so great a change in the minds of our first parents from absolute righteousness of temper to presumptuous wickedness; accompanied with an equal change of body, from an immortal condition to a mortal one, produced perhaps, in part, by the physical effects of the forbidden fruit, that these things, I say, should derive their fatal influences to every succeeding generation. For though God

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will

* Rom. vii. 14.

† Eccl. vii. 29.

‡ Rom. v. 12.

will never impute any thing to us, as our personal fault, which is not our own doing; yet he may very justly withhold from us those privileges, which he granted to our first parents only on condition of their faultless obedience, and leave us subject to those inconveniences, which followed of course from their disobedience: as, in multitudes of other cases, we see children in far worse circumstances by the faults of their distant forefathers, than they otherwise would have been. And most evidently, it is no more a hardship upon us, to become such as we are by means of Adam's transgression, than to suffer what we often do for the transgressions of our other ancestors; or to have been created such as we are, without any one's transgression: which last, all who disbelieve original sin, must affirm to be our case.

But unhappy for us as the failure of the first man was, we should be happy in comparison, if this were all that we had to lament. Great as the native disorder of our frame is; yet either the fall of Adam left in it, or God restored to it, some degree of disposition to obedience, and of strength against sin: so that tho' *in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing**, yet *after the inward man, (the mind) we delight in the law of God*†; and there are occasions on which even *the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law*‡, though neither all, nor any, without fault. And on us Christians our heavenly Father confers, in our baptism, the assurance of much greater strength to obey his commands, than they have. But then, if we consider,

2. What we have made our condition since, we shall find, that instead of using well the abilities which we had, and taking the methods, which our Maker hath appointed for the increase of them, we have often carelessly, and too often wilfully, misemployed the former, and neglected the latter. Now by every instance of such behaviour, we displease God, weaken our right affections, and add new strength to wrong passions: and by habits of such behaviour, corrupting our hearts, and blinding our understandings, we bring ourselves into a much worse condition, than that in which we were born; and thus become doubly incapable of doing our duty. This experience proves but too plainly; though scripture did not teach, as it doth,

* Rom. vii. 18.

† Ver. 22, 23.

‡ Rom. ii. 14.

doth, that *the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth**: that we were *shapen in iniquity, and in sin did our mother conceive us*†: that *the carnal mind is enmity against God*‡: that *without Christ we can do nothing*§; and we are not sufficient to think any thing, as of ourselves ||.

Yet, notwithstanding this, we feel within us an obligation of conscience to do every thing that is right and good. For that obligation is in its nature unchangeable: and we cannot be made happy otherwise, than by endeavouring to fulfil it; though God, for the sake of our blessed Redeemer, will make fit allowances for our coming short of it. But then we must not hope for such allowances as would really be unfit. Our original weakness indeed is not our fault; but our neglect of being relieved from it, and the additions that we have made to it are. And whatever we might have had the power of doing, if we would; it is no injustice to punish us for not doing: especially when the means of enabling ourselves continue to be offered to us through our lives. Now, in fact, the whole race of mankind, I charitably hope and believe, have, by the general grace or favour of God, the means of doing so much, at least, as may exempt them from future sufferings. But Christians, by the *special grace* mentioned in this part of the catechism, are qualified to do so much more, as will intitle them, not for their own worthiness, but that of the holy Jesus, to a distinguishing share of future reward.

Now the special grace of the gospel consists, partly in the outward revelation, which it makes to us, of divine truths; partly in the inward assistance, which it bestows on us, for obeying the Divine will. The latter is the point, here to be considered.

That God is able, by secret influences on our minds, to dispose us powerfully in favour of what is right, there can be no doubt: for we are able in some degree to influence one another thus. That there is need of his doing it, we have all but too much experience: and that therefore we may reasonably hope for it, evidently follows. He interposes continually by his providence, to carry on the course of nature in the material world: is it not then very likely, that he should interpose

* Gen. viii. 21.

† Psal. li. 5.

‡ Rom. viii. 7.

§ John xv. 5.

|| 2 Cor. iii. 5.

pose in a case, which, as far as we can judge, is yet more worthy of his interposition; and incline and strengthen his poor creatures to become good and happy, by gracious impressions on their souls, as occasions require? But still, hope and likelihood are not certainty: and God, *whose ways are past finding out**, might have left all men to their own strength, or rather indeed their own weakness. But whatever he doth in relation to others, which is not our concern, he hath clearly promised to us Christians, that *his grace shall be sufficient for us*†; his Holy Spirit shall enable us effectually to do every thing which his word requires.

We may *resist*‡ his motions: or we may receive them into our souls, and act in consequence of them. Every one hath power enough to do right: scripture, as well as reason, shows it: only we have it not resident in us by nature; but bestowed on us continually by our Maker, as we want it. In all good actions that we perform, *the preparation of the heart is from the Lord*§. And that *faith*, which is the fountain of all actions truly good, *is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God*||. But *he giveth liberally to all*¶, who ask him; and therefore no one hath cause of complaint.

It is true, we are seldom able to distinguish this heavenly influence from the natural workings of our own minds: as indeed we are often influenced one by another without perceiving it. But the assurance, given in scripture, of its being vouchsafed to us, is abundantly sufficient: to which, experience also would add strong confirmation, did we but attend with due seriousness to what passes within our breasts.

Our natural freedom of will is no more impaired by these secret admonitions of our Maker, than by the secret persuasions of our fellow-creatures. And the advantage of having God's help, far from making it unnecessary to help ourselves, obliges us to it peculiarly. We are therefore to *work out our own salvation*, because *he worketh in us both to will and to do**. For it is a great aggravation of every sin, that, in committing it, we *quench* the pious motions excited by *the Spirit*† of God in our hearts: and a great incitement to our endeavours of performing every duty, that with such aid we may be sure of success.

* Rom. xi. 33. † 2 Cor. xii. 9. ‡ Acts vii. 51. § Prov. xvi. 1.
 || Eph. ii. 8. ¶ Jam. i. 5. * Phil. ii. 12, 14. † 1 Thes. v. 19.

success. Our own natural strength cannot increase, as temptations and difficulties do: but that which we receive from Heaven can. And thus it is, that we learn courage and humility at once; by knowing, that *we can do all things*, but *only through Christ which strengtheneth us* *; and therefore *not we, but the grace of God, which is with us* †.

This grace therefore being of such importance to us, our catechism, with great reason, directs us *at all times to call for it by diligent prayer*. For our heavenly Father hath not promised, nor can we hope, that he *will give the Holy Spirit to them who* proudly disdain, or negligently omit, to *ask him* ‡. And hence it becomes peculiarly necessary, that we should understand how to pray to him: a duty mentioned in the former part of the catechism, but reserved to be explained more fully in this.

God having bestowed on us the knowledge, in some measure, of what he is in himself, and more especially of what he is to us; we are doubtless bound to be suitably affected by it: and to keep alive in our minds, with the utmost care, due sentiments of our continual dependence on him, of reverence and submission to his will, of love and gratitude for his goodness, of humility and sorrow for all our sins against him; and earnest desire, that his mercy and favour may be shown, in such manner as he shall think fit, to us and to all our fellow-creatures.

Now, if these sentiments ought to be felt, they ought also to be some way expressed: not only that others may see we have them, and be excited to them by our example; but that we ourselves may receive both the comfort and the improvement, which must naturally flow from exercising such valuable affections. And unquestionably the most lively and most respectful manner of exercising them is, that we direct them to him who is the object of them; and pour out our hearts before him in suitable acts of homage, thanksgiving, and confession; in humble petitions for ourselves, and intercessions for all mankind. Not that God is ignorant, till we inform him, either of our outward circumstances, or the inward temper of our hearts. If he were, our prayers would give him very imperfect knowledge of either: for we are greatly ignorant
of

* Phil. iv. 13.

† 1 Cor. xv. 10.

‡ Luke xi. 13.

of both ourselves. But the design of prayer is, to bring our own minds into a right frame; and so make ourselves fit for those blessings, for which we are very unfit, while we are too vain or too careless to ask them of God.

The very act of prayer therefore will do us good, if we pray with attention, else it is worse than nothing. And the consequences of praying, God hath promised, shall be further good. *All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive* * ? Not absolutely *all things whatsoever* we desire: for some of our desires may be on several accounts unfit, and some would prove extremely hurtful to us. Therefore we ought to consider well what we pray for: and especially in all temporal matters refer ourselves wholly to God's good pleasure. Nor doth he always grant immediately what he designs to grant, and hath given us the fullest right to ask: but delays it perhaps a while to exercise our patience and trust in him: for which reason our Saviour directs us *always to pray, and not to faint* †. But whatever is really good, he will undoubtedly as soon as it is really necessary, give us upon our request: provided further, that with our earnest petitions, we join our honest endeavours: for prayer was never designed to serve instead of diligence, but to assist it. And therefore, if, in our temporal affairs, we are idle or inconsiderate, we must not expect that our prayers will bring us good success: and if, in our spiritual ones, we wilfully or thoughtlessly neglect ourselves; we must not imagine, that God will amend us against our wills, or whilst we continue supinely indifferent. But let us do our duty to the best of our power, at the same time that we pray for his blessing; and we may be assured, that nothing but an injurious disbelief can prevent our obtaining it: on which account St James requires, that we *ask in faith, nothing wavering* ‡.

Indeed without the encouragement given us in scripture, it might well be with some diffidence, and it should be with the utmost reverence, that *we take upon us to speak unto the Lord, who are but dust and ashes* §. The heathens therefore addressed their prayers to imaginary deities of an inferior rank, as judging themselves unworthy to approach the Supreme One. But our rule is, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt*

* Mat. xxi. 22. † Luke xviii. 1. ‡ Jam. i. 6. § Gen. xviii. 27.

shalt thou serve *. The affected *humility of worshipping* even *angels*, and therefore much more *faints*, (who, if really such, are yet *lower than angels* †) may, as we are taught, *beguile us of our reward* ‡: whereas we may *come boldly to the throne* § of our Maker's grace ¶, tho' not in our own right, yet through the Mediator whom he hath appointed: and who hath both procured us the privilege, and instructed us how to use it, by delivering to us a prayer of his own composition; which might be at once a form for us frequently to repeat, and a pattern for us always to imitate.

That the Lord's prayer was designed as a form, appears from his own words: *After this manner pray ye*; or, translating more literally, *Thus pray ye* ||; and, which is yet more express, *When ye pray, say, Our Father* ¶, &c. Besides it was given by him to his disciples on their request, that he would *teach them to pray, as John also taught his disciples* *: which undoubtedly was, as the great Rabbies amongst the Jews commonly taught theirs, by a form. And accordingly this prayer hath been considered and used as such, from the earliest ages of Christianity down to the present.

Yet our Saviour's design was not, that this should be the only prayer of Christians: as appears both from the precepts and the practice of the apostles, as well as from the nature and reason of the thing. But when it is not used as a form, it is however of unspeakable advantage as a model. He proposes it indeed more particularly as an example of shortness. Not that we are never to make longer prayers: for he himself *continued all night in prayer to God* †: and we have a much longer, made by the apostles, in the fourth chapter of the Acts. But his intention was, to teach by this instance, that we are not to affect unmeaning repetitions, or any needless multiplicity of words, as if we *thought that we should be heard for our much speaking* ++. And not only in this respect, but every other, is our Lord's prayer an admirable institution and direction for praying aright: as will abundantly appear, when the several parts of it come to be distinctly explained. But though such explanation will show, both the purport and the excellency

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of

* Matth. iv. 10.

† Psal. viii. 5.

‡ Col. ii. 18.

§ Heb. iv. 16.

|| Matth. vi. 9.

¶ Luke xi. 2.

* Verse 1.

† Luke vi. 12.

++ Matth. vi. 7.

of it, more fully: yet they are to every eye visible in the main, without any explanation at all. And therefore let us conclude at present, with devoutly offering it up to God.

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

LECTURE XXX.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name.

THE prayer, which our blessed Saviour taught his disciples, doth not need to be explained, as being, in itself, and originally, obscure: For no words could be more intelligible to his apostles, than all those which he hath used throughout it. And even to us now, there is nothing that deserves the name of difficult; notwithstanding the distance of time, the change of circumstances, and the different nature and turn of the Jewish tongue from our own. But still, in order to apprehend it sufficiently, there is requisite some knowledge of religion, and the language of religion. Besides, as we all learnt it when we were young, whilst we had but little understanding, and less attention; it is not impossible, but some of us may have gone on repeating it to an advanced age, without considering it near so carefully as we ought. And this very thing, that the words are so familiar to us, may have been the main occasion, that we have scarce ever thought of their im-
port.

port. Now we are sensible, it would be a great unhappiness to have our devotions, as the Church of Rome have the principal part of theirs, in a language that we could not understand. But surely it is as great a fault, if, when we may so easily understand them, when we think of the matter, we think about it so little, that, as to all good purposes, it is much the same with praying in an unknown tongue. The Lord's Prayer, in itself, is very clear, very expressive, very comprehensive. But all this is nothing to us, if we say it without knowing, or without minding what we say. For how excellent words soever we use; if we add no meaning to them, this can be no praying. And therefore, to make it really beneficial to us, we must fix deeply in our thoughts what it was intended by its Author to contain.

Now it consists, you may observe, of three parts. I. An invocation, or calling upon God. II. Petitions offered. III. Praises ascribed to him.

The Invocation is in these words, *Our Father, which art in heaven*. And, few as they are, they express very fully the grounds on which divine worship stands.

As the whole world derives its being from God, he is on that account stiled, *the Father of all**. But as rational creatures are produced, not only by him, but in his image and likeness, he is in a stricter sense the Father of these. And therefore angels and men are called in scripture, what the animals beneath them never are, *the sons*†, and the *offspring of God*‡: in which sense the prophet saith, *O Lord, thou art our Father, and we are all the work of thy hand*§. Now, as our Creator, he is evidently not only our Father, but also our Sovereign Lord.

A second title God hath to this name, from that fatherly providence and goodness, which he exercises every where continually: and of which mankind hath large experience; not only in the many enjoyments, comforts, and deliverances, that he grants us, but even in the afflictions which he sends us, always for our benefit; then more especially *dealing with us as with children whom he loveth*||.

But there is yet a third reason, why we call him *our Father*,

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* Eph. iv. 6. † Job i. 6. ii. 1. xxxviii. 7. ‡ Acts xvii. 29.

§ Isa. lxiv. 8.

|| Heb. xii. 5, &c.

ther, peculiar to us as Christians ; and founded on our being united by faith to his Son *our Head* *, and begotten again, through his gospel, to a lively hope, to an inheritance reserved in heaven for us †: privileges so invaluable, that though he is doubtless a Father, and a tender one, to our whole species, yet his word speaks of us as the only persons, in comparison, that have a right to consider him in this view. *As many as received him*, that is our blessed Saviour, *to them gave he power to become the sons of God ; even to them that believe on his name* ‡. *The Lord is good to all* §: but singularly good to those, who become, by the influences of the Christian covenant, singularly fit objects of his goodness. They have promises of the greatest blessings, to which nothing, but promise, can intitle: pardon of sin, assistance of the Holy Spirit, and life eternal ; by which last they are made, in the happiest sense, the *children of God, being the children of the resurrection* ||. Let us learn then, as often as we say, *Our Father*, to magnify in our souls, that gracious Redeemer, who hath made him so to us, more than he is to others. Let us often repeat the thankful reflection of St John, *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God* ¶: and joyfully argue as St Paul doth, *If children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ* *.

Thus then the words, *Our Father*, express, not only the absolute authority, but the unspeakable goodness of God : and the next, *which art in heaven*, acknowledge his glory and power.

I have already observed to you, in explaining the sixth article of the Creed, that as God cannot but be, so he cannot but be every where : for there is nothing in any one part of space to confine his presence to that, rather than to any other. Besides, his providence is continually acting every where : and wherever he acts, he is. Therefore Solomon justly declares, *The heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee* †. But still, the scriptures represent him as manifesting the more visible tokens of his inexpressible Majesty in one peculiar place: where he receives the homage of his holy angels, and issues forth

* 1 Cor. xi. 3. Eph. i. 22.

† 1 Cor. iv. 15. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

‡ John i. 12.

§ Psal. cxlv. 9.

|| Luke xx. 26.

¶ 1 John iii. 1.

* Rem. viii. 17.

† 1 Kings viii. 27. 2 Chron. ii. 6. vi. 18.

forth his commands for the government of the world. This they call his *throne* *, and *tabernacle in heaven* †: of which the earthly tabernacle of Moses was designed to be a figure; being directed to be *made according to the pattern shewed him in the Mount* ‡. That earthly tabernacle was honoured for a long time with splendid marks of divine residence: on which account, even after they were withdrawn, the Jews would be apt to consider God, as dwelling at Jerusalem in his temple, and *sitting between the cherubim* §. But our blessed Lord, being about to abolish the Mosaic ordinances, enlarges the views of his disciples, and raises them to that higher habitation of inconceivable glory, to which they should hereafter be admitted; and on which they were in the mean while to set their hearts, as the seat of all blessedness.

But further, being *in heaven* denotes likewise the Almighty Power of God: agreeably to that of the Psalmist, *Our God is in the Heavens: he hath done whatever he pleased* ||. For as a higher situation gives a superior strength and command; and accordingly in all languages, being exalted or brought low, signifies an increase or lessening of dominion or influence: so representing God, as placed above all, is designed to express, in the strongest manner, that *his kingdom ruleth over all* ¶.

When therefore we call upon *our Father which is in Heaven*, we profess to God our belief, that he is the Author and Preserver of the universe, who governs all things with paternal care; but extends his favours especially to those, who, by imitating and obeying him, shew themselves his true children; and therefore most especially to such, as having acquired, by the merits and grace of his Son, the nearest relation and resemblance to him, have thereby a covenant-right to an eternal inheritance in that blessed place, where he exhibits his glory, and reigns, possessed of sovereign authority, and boundless power.

Now applying thus to God, under the notion of *our Father*, is excellently fitted to remind us, both of the dutiful regard, which we ought to have for him, as he himself pleads, *If I be a Father, where is mine honour* *? and also, of the kindness which we may expect from him, according to our Saviour's reason-

* Psal. xi. 4. † Heb. viii. 1, 2. ‡ Heb. viii. 5. § Psal. xcix. 1.

|| Psal. cxv. 3. ¶ Psal. ciii. 19. • Mal. i. 6.

reasoning, *If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him* *? Nor is this expression less fitted to admonish us of copying the goodness, which we adore; and exercising mercy and bounty to our fellow-creatures, as far as we can, *that we may be*, in this excellent sense, *the children of our Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust* †. And this admonition is greatly strengthened, as each of us is directed to address himself to God, not as to his own Father merely, but as to *our Father*, the common Parent of mankind. For there is inexpressible force in that argument: *Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously, or in any respect unjustly or unkindly, every man against his brother* ‡? And yet with greater force still doth it hold, to prevent mutual injuries or unkindnesses amongst Christians: who being, in a much closer and more endearing sense, children of God, and brethren one to another, than the rest of the world; surely ought never to be, what they are too often, remarkably deficient in that reciprocal affection, which was intended as the token, whereby *all men should know them* §.

Then, at the same time, the consideration, that this *our Father is in heaven*, possessed of infinite power and glory, tends greatly to inspire us with reverence towards him, at all times, and in all places, but in our devotions peculiarly. And to this end it is pleaded by the wise King: *Keep thy foot, when thou goest to the house of God; be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth* ||. It also tends no less to remind us, what the great end of our prayers and our lives should be: to obtain admittance into that blessed place, *where God is, and Christ sits on his right hand* ¶. *For in his presence is the fulness of joy; and at his right hand, there is pleasure for evermore* *.

You see then, how many important truths and admonitions these few words, which begin the Lord's Prayer, include: every

* Luke xi. 13. † Mat. v. 45. ‡ Mal. ii. 10. § John xiii. 35.

|| Eccl. v. 1, 2. ¶ Col. iii. 1. * Psal. xvi. 12.

very thing indeed, which can encourage us to pray, or dispose us to pray as we ought.

The petition which immediately follows, *Hallowed be thy name*, is perhaps more liable to be repeated without being understood, than any of the rest: but when understood, as it easily may be, appears highly proper to stand in the very first part of a Christian's prayer. The name of God means here God himself, his person and attributes: as it doth in many other places of scripture, where *fearing*, or *blessing*, or *calling upon the Name of the Lord* is mentioned. And to *hallow his Name*, signifies, to think of him as a Holy Being, and behave towards him accordingly. Now the word, *holy*, hath been already more than once, in the course of these lectures explained to mean whatever is worthy of being distinguished with serious respect. And therefore all such persons, places, things, and times, as are set apart from vulgar uses, and devoted to religious ones, are said in scripture to be holy, and commanded to be hallowed. Now these being generally preserved with great care, as they always ought, from whatever may defile and pollute them; hence the term, *holy*, came to signify what is clean and pure. And the most valuable purity, beyond comparison, being that of a mind untainted by sin, and secure from tendencies towards it; holiness more especially denotes this; and may in various degrees be ascribed to men and angels; but in absolute perfection to none but God. For he, and he alone, is infinitely removed from all possibility of doing, or thinking, or approving evil.

This then is the sense in which we are to acknowledge, that *holy and reverend is his name**: this conception of him is the manner, in which we are to *hallow* it, and *sanctify the Lord God in our hearts*†: a matter of unspeakable importance, and the very foundation of all true religion. For if we are not fully persuaded, that he is *of purer eyes than to behold evil*‡ with indifference; if we imagine, that he can ever act unrighteously himself, or allow others to do so; that he is in any case the author of sin; or esteems and loves any thing in his creatures, but uprightness and goodness; or shows himself to be other, than a perfectly great, and wise, and just, and gracious being: so far as we do this, we mistake his nature, and

* Psal. cxi. 9.

† 1 Pet. iii. 15.

‡ Hab. i. 13.

and dishonour him; and set up an idol of our own fancy, instead of the true God. The consequence of which will be, that in proportion as our notions of him are false, our worship, imitation, and obedience will be erroneous also; our piety and our morals will both be corrupted; we shall neglect what alone can recommend us to him; we shall hope to please him by performances of no value, perhaps by wicked deeds; and *the light, that is in us, will become darkness* *.

No wonder then, if we are directed to make it our first petition, that we and all men may *hallow God's Name*, as we ought: that so right a sense of his nature and attributes, especially his wisdom, justice, and goodness, may prevail through the world, as may banish at once both profaneness and superstition, and engage us all to fear and love him equally: that we may entertain such notions of Christianity, as will promote its honour; and allow ourselves in nothing, that may bring disgrace upon it, or tempt any to *blaspheme*, instead of sanctifying, *that worthy Name by which we are called* †: but that each of us, in our stations, may, with all diligence, and all prudence, propagate the belief of *pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father* ‡. This is the way, and the only way possible, for us truly to honour him, and be truly good and happy: happy in ourselves, and in each other; in the present world, and that which is to come. With this petition therefore our blessed Lord most rationally directs us to begin. And let us all remember, that what he bids us pray for in the first place, he will expect that we should endeavour after in the first place; and as we acknowledge *him who hath called us, to be holy*, that we should *be holy also in all manner of conversation* §.

* Mat. vi. 23. † Jam. ii. 7. ‡ Jam. i. 27. § 1 Pet. i. 15.

LECTURE XXXI.

Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done.

THE second petition of the Lord's Prayer, *Thy kingdom come*, follows very naturally after the first, *Hallowed be thy Name*. For hallowing the name of God, that is, entertaining just notions, and being possessed with a deep sense, of the holiness of his nature, his abhorrence of sin, his justice and goodness; is the necessary preparative for submitting to, and being faithful subjects of, that kingdom, for the coming of which we are directed to pray.

God indeed is, ever was, and cannot but be, Lord and King of the whole world, possessed of all right and all dominion, over all things: as the plainest reason shows, and the conclusion of this very prayer, in conformity to the rest of scripture, acknowledges. In this sense therefore we cannot pray for his kingdom, as something future, but only rejoice in its being actually present: for what can be greater joy, than to live under the government of infinite mercy, wisdom, and power? *The Lord reigneth: let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof**.

But besides this natural kingdom of God, there is a moral and spiritual one, founded on the willing obedience of reasonable creatures to those laws of righteousness, which he hath given them. Now this, we have too plain evidence, is not yet come amongst men so fully as it ought. The very first of human race revolted from their Maker; and their descendants, as both scripture and other history shows, grew, age after age, yet more and more disobedient; till at length the inhabitants of the whole earth, instead of being the happy subjects of God's rightful empire, became, by immoral lives, and idolatrous worship, most wretched slaves to the usurped dominion of the wicked one. The wisdom and goodness of God made immediate provision, through his only Son our Lord, to

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oppose

* Psalm xcvi. 1

oppose this kingdom of darkness, as soon as it appeared in the world: not by his absolute power; for obedience loses its value, unless it proceed from choice; but by the rational method of instructions, promises, and warnings from Heaven, super-added to what nature taught, and suited to the circumstances of every age.

These he gave at first by the patriarchs to all men promiscuously: and whoever acknowledged his authority, and obeyed his laws, was a good subject and true member of his kingdom. But when afterwards, notwithstanding this care, the corruption of mankind was become general, he chose the posterity of his servant Abraham, and distinguished them by his especial favour: not as casting off the rest of the world; for *in every nation, at all times, they that fear God, and work righteousness, are accepted with him**: but that, in this people at least, the profession of faith in him, and subjection to him, might be kept alive: not merely for their own benefit, but the information of others also. With them therefore was the kingdom of God, in a peculiar degree, for 1500 years. While they flourished in their own land, they held forth the light of truth to all the nations round them. And when they were led captive or dispersed into other lands, they spread it yet farther: and thus were great instruments in preparing the rest of mankind for that general re-establishment of obedience to the true God, as King and Lord of all, which our blessed Saviour came to effect.

The gospel dispensation therefore having this for its end, and being much more perfectly fitted to attain it, than any preceding manifestation of religion had been; the scripture, in a distinguished manner, calls it *the Kingdom of God, or of Heaven*: both which words denote, in exactly the same view, that dominion, which in Daniel it is foretold, *the God of Heaven should set up, and which should never be destroyed*†. Our Saviour was then, after John the Baptist, only giving notice of its approach, and opening the way for setting it up, when he first directed his disciples to pray, that it might come. By his death he raised it on the ruins of the devil's usurpation, *over whom he triumphed on his cross*‡: and now it hath been many ages in the world. But still it is by no means come, in that

* Acts x. 35. † Dan. ii. 44. ‡ Col. ii. 15.

that extent, and to that good effect, which we have reason to beg that it may, and to believe that it will. The largest part of mankind hath not, so much as in profession, entered into this kingdom: but lies overwhelmed in Pagan idolatry, Jewish unbelief, or Mahometan delusion. The largest part of Christians have corrupted the doctrine of Christ with grievous errors: and those who preserve the purest faith, too generally live such impure and wicked lives; that, though the kingdom of God hath indeed taken place amongst them in outward appearance, yet in that sense, which will prove at last the only important one, they are still far from it. *For the kingdom of God, saith our Saviour, is within you**: and consists, as the apostle further explains it, *in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the grace of the Holy Ghost†*.

Here then is great room, and great need, for praying; that the *beathen* may become *the inheritance of Christ, and the uttermost parts of the Mahometan world his possession‡*: that the Jews, *from whom, for their unbelief, the Kingdom of God hath been so long taken § away*, may be restored to a share in it; as the prophets, both of the Old and New Testament, have foretold they shall: and lastly, *that all who profess and call themselves Christians, may not only be led into the way of truth, but hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life ||*. How little prospect soever there may be at present of such happiness as this, yet *we have a sure word of prophesy ¶*, for the ground of our prayers, that the time shall come, when *the kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ **, in a degree that they have never been yet: when *all the people shall be righteous †*, and *know the Lord, from the greatest unto the least ++*.

But the kingdom of God upon earth, even in its best estate, is comparatively but short-lived and imperfect, indeed a mere introduction to that glorious and eternal manifestation of it in heaven, which ought ever to be the objects of our most ardent desires and requests. For as the governor, and the governed, and the great fundamental laws of government, are

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still

* Luke xvii. 21. † Rom. xiv. 17. ‡ Psal. ii. 8. § Mat. xxi. 33.

|| Prayer for all conditions of men. ¶ 2 Pet i. 19. * Rev. xi. 15.

† Isa. lx. 21. ++ Jer. xxxi. 34.

still to be the same, in the present state of trial, and the future one of recompence; they both make up together but one kingdom of God. And therefore, when we pray for the coming of it, we pray, in the last place, for the arrival of that time, when the King and Judge of all *shall sit upon the throne of his glory* *, and *reward every man according to his works* †; when *the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father* ‡; even that *kingdom which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world* §; and *shall reign with him in it for ever and ever* ||.

But then, as we pray for this time, we must prepare for it also: else we do nothing but ask our own condemnation; as the Prophet Amos hath most awfully warned us: *Wo unto you that desire the day of the Lord. To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light* ¶.

To instruct us therefore, on what it is, that our share in the kingdom of God depends, our Saviour immediately subjoins another petition, expressing it very clearly: *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. For not every one that saith unto him, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven* *: but they only who *do the will of God, shall receive his promise* †.

Indeed what God *wills* to do himself, that he *doth accordingly*, both in the army of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth; and none can *stay his hand* ++. But what he *wills* us to do, that he only requires of us, as we value his favour, or fear his displeasure; leaving us designedly that power of not doing what he bids us, without which, doing it were no virtue. But though disobedience to his will is in our power, yet obedience is not so, without the assistance of his grace: which therefore, in these words, we desire for ourselves, and for all men. And since, by the means of prayer, we may have strength to obey his will granted us; we are certainly with as much justice, expected to obey it, as if we had the power already of our own.

Now the will of God consists in these two things: That we suffer patiently what he lays upon us, and perform faithfully what he commands us. The former of these; to bear with resignation

* Matth. xxv. 31. † Matth. xvi. 27. ‡ Matth. xiii. 43.

§ Mat. xxv. 34. || Rev. xx. 6. xxii. 5. ¶ Amos v. 18. * Mat. vii. 21.

Heb. x. 36. ++ Dan. iv. 35.

resignation whatever, in any kind, God sees proper to inflict; and, though we may wish and pray for the prevention or removal of sufferings, yet to be content, nay, desirous that *his will should be done, not ours* *; may often prove a difficult, but is always an evident and necessary duty. For to indulge a contrary disposition, is to set up ourselves above our Maker; to rebel against his authority, deny his wisdom, and distrust his goodness. The ability therefore of submitting meekly to his pleasure, is undoubtedly one great thing that we are to request, and endeavour to obtain.

But still, as the blessed inhabitants of heaven surely have little or no occasion for this kind of obedience, we have reason to think that the other, the active sort, is the point which our Saviour defined we should principally have in view, when we beg, that God's will may be done by us, as it is by them: by *his angels that fulfil his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his words; those ministers of his, that do his pleasure* †. Not that we can hope to equal the services of beings placed so much above us: but only aspire to such resemblance of them, that our obedience may bear the same proportion to our abilities, which that of the heavenly spirits doth to theirs. Their knowledge of God's will is clear and distinct: on which account, the highest character given of human wisdom is, to be *as an angel of God, to discern good and bad* ‡. It should therefore, when we make use of this petition, be our desire, that we also, in our degree, may be *not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is* §, and may abound, more and more, in knowledge and all judgment ||. They do every thing, without exception; which they know to be God's pleasure: whereas we are very apt to omit part, and perform the rest but imperfectly. They do it with alacrity and cheerfulness: whereas we too often show great backwardness and reluctance. They do it also from a real principle of duty: whereas, were the truth but known, as to God it is known, a great share of the good actions, upon which we value ourselves, are perhaps only good appearances; proceeding some from constitution, some from worldly prudence, some from vanity; few, it may be doubted, principally, and fewer yet, entirely, from the love or fear of God,

* Luke xxii. 42. † Psal. ciii. 20, 21. ‡ 2 Sam. xiv. 17.

§ Eph. v. 17. || Phil. i. 9.

God, from esteem of virtue, or hatred of sin. In these respects then we must earnestly pray, and diligently endeavour, to be like the holy angels: and were we but like them in one thing more; that they all, without exception, do the will of God, and have none amongst them disobedient to it; then would our earth resemble heaven indeed. How far this is from being the case, we know too well. But notwithstanding, let us comfort ourselves with considering, that as the time was, when even these blessed spirits had a mixture of evil ones amongst them; so the time will be, when we shall have no such mixture amongst us: but shall become, in this and all respects, *as the angels of God in heaven* *.

* Matth. xxii. 30.

LECTURE XXXII.

Give us this day our daily bread: And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

THE three former of the six petitions of the Lord's Prayer express our earnest desires, that we, and all our fellow-creatures, may attain the great end of our creation, that is, may understand, receive, and practise, true religion, to God's honour and our own eternal happiness: after which we proceed, in the three last, to ask of him the means to this end; such supplies of our wants, as will be needful for the performance of our duties. And they are comprehended under three heads more: The relief of our temporal necessities, the forgiveness of our past sins, and the assistance of his grace against future temptations.

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The first of these blessings we request, by saying, *Give us this day our daily bread*. All the good things of life, and all of our capacity of receiving support and comfort from them, proceed, as every thing doth, from God's free gift; and therefore depend, as every thing doth, on his free pleasure: for what he hath bestowed, he can, with just the same ease, at any time, take away. He hath placed things indeed in a regular, and what we call natural, course and order. But this order is not only of his own appointing, but his own preserving too. *He it is, that maketh his sun to rise**; that *giveth us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness†*. Were he only thus kind to us all in general, it would certainly be our duty to acknowledge his kindness, and pray for the continuance of it. But as we learn from scripture further, that his providence extends, even in the minutest instances, to each of us in particular; and that not the smallest thing comes to pass, but by his appointment, or wise permission‡; this furnishes additional reasons for applying to him, that his continual superintendency may be ever exercised towards us for our good. We know not indeed with certainty, in these matters, what will be good for us. But still, since he hath given us desires, inseparable from our frame, of enjoying life to its ordinary term, with a competent share of the several accommodations which contribute to make it agreeable; it must be lawful to express those desires to him in a proper manner. And this our Saviour directs us how to do, when he bids us petition for *our daily bread*.

The word *bread*, as it frequently signifies in scripture all sorts of food, so it may very naturally signify, what it doth in this prayer, all sorts of things requisite in human life. This Agur meant, when he prayed, that God would *feed him with food* (in the original it is *bread*) *convenient for him§*. And this we mean in common discourse, as often as we speak of persons getting their *bread*. But then it must by no means be extended beyond things requisite; those, without which we are unable either to subsist at all, or however conveniently and comfortably. Not that desires of further advantages in the world are universally unlawful. But they are so apt to en-

large,

* Mat. v. 45. † Acts xiv. 17. ‡ Mat. x. 29, 30. Luke xii. 6, 7.

§ Prov. xxx. 8.

large, and swell into extravagant and sinful passions; into schemes of luxury, or vanity, or covetousness; that we have usually much more need to restrain and check, than authorize them, by asking the accomplishment of them from God; lest we be guilty of what St James condemns *asking amiss, that we may consume it upon our lusts* *.

It is therefore only for such a share of worldly good, as to a reasonable and moderate mind will appear sufficient, that our Saviour allows us here to pray; in the spirit which Agur, in the prayer just mentioned, expresses; *Give me neither poverty nor riches: feed me with food convenient for me. Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of God in vain* †. For indeed, though the temptations of extreme poverty are very great; yet the tendency of wealth and ease, and power, to sensuality and pride and forgetfulness of God is so exceeding strong, that a well-instructed and considerate mind would rather submit, than chuse to be placed in a condition of abundance and eminence. For preserving the order, and conducting the affairs of the world, some must be in such stations: but let all who are, look well to their ways; and let none of their inferiors envy them.

It ought to be further observed here, that our blessed Lord hath not only confined us to pray for *our bread*, but *our daily bread*; to be given us, as we ask for it, day by day: intending, doubtless, to make us remember and acknowledge, that our dependance on God is continual, from one moment to another: that they, who have the most of this world, have it only during his pleasure; and are bound, both to ask, and receive every day's enjoyment of it, as a new gift from him: while, at the same time, they who have least may be assured, that what he hath commanded them to pray for, he will ordinarily not fail to bestow upon them; by blessing their endeavours; or by stirring up the charity of others towards them, if they are not.

For as to those who can labour, industry is the method by which God hath thought fit to give them their bread; and therefore, by which they ought to seek it. They have no title to it any other way; St Paul having directed, *that if any*
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* James iv. 13.

† Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

one will not work, neither should he eat *. Nor must they work only to supply their present necessities: but, by diligence and frugality, lay up something, if possible, for future exigencies also: *learning of the ant, which provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest* †.

So that applying for our daily bread to God, is far from excluding a proper care to use the appointed means of procuring it for ourselves. But if our care be a presumptuous one, and void of regard to the disposer of all things; we provoke him to blast our fairest hopes. And if it be an anxious and distrustful one, we think injuriously of him to whom we pray: who can as easily give us the bread of to-morrow, as he gave us that of yesterday. Nay, if our worldly cares, though they do not disquiet our minds, yet engross them: if we carry our attention to this world so far as to forget the next; or imagine ourselves to be secure in stores *laid up for many years* ‡, than in God's good providence: this also is very unsuitable to the spirit, both of our Lord's Prayer, and of his whole religion; which commands us to *seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness* §, and *not to trust in uncertain riches, but in him, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy* ||.

I shall only add two observations more, which have been made very justly on this petition ¶: that, since we ask our bread from God, we ought not to accept it from the devil; that is, to gain our subsistence by any unlawful means: and that, since we do not say, *Give me my daily bread*; but, *give us ours*; we entreat God to supply the wants of others, as well as our own. Now the means which he hath provided for supplying the wants of the helpless poor, is the charity of the rich. And to pray him, that they may be relieved, and yet withhold from them what he hath designed for their relief, is just that piece of inconsistency, or hypocrisy, which St James so strongly exposes. *If a brother or a sister, be naked, and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed, and be ye filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body: what doth it profit* *?

From our temporal wants, we proceed next to a much more

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important

* 2 Thess. iii. 10. † Prov. vi. 8. ‡ Luke xii. 19. § Mat. vi. 33.

|| 1 Tim. vi. 17. ¶ By Bp Blackhall. * Jam. ii. 15, 16.

important concern, our spiritual ones : and here we ask in the first place, what it is very fit we should, pardon and mercy. *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* The forgiveness of sins having been already explained, under that article of the Creed which relates to it ; I shall only take notice at present of the argument, which we are directed to use in pleading for it, which is likewise the especial condition of our obtaining it ; that *we also forgive**, as we hope to be forgiven. And concerning this, two things ought to be understood : what that forgiveness is, to which we are bound : and how far the exercise of it will avail us.

Now the obligation to forgiveness means, not that the magistrate is to omit punishing malefactors ; *for he is the minister of God, a revenger, to execute wrath upon him that doth evil†* : not that the rulers of the church are to forbear spiritual censures against notorious offenders ; for the scripture hath appointed them, for the amendment of sinners, and the preservation of the innocent, when they are likely to have these good effects : not that private persons do amiss in bringing transgressors to justice ; for neglecting it would be in general only a seeming kindness to them, and a real mischief to human society : not that we are forbidden to make reasonable demands on such as withhold our dues, or do us any damage ; for recovering a debt is a very different thing from revenging an injury : nor lastly, that we are always bound, when persons have behaved ill to us, either to think as well of them as before ; which may be impossible ; or to trust and favour them as much, which may be unwise. But our obligation to forgive doth mean, and absolutely require, that civil governors be moderate and merciful ; and ecclesiastical ones make use of discipline *to edification, not to destruction‡* : that, in our private capacity, we pass by all offences, which, with safety to ourselves, and the public we can : that where we must punish, we do it with reluctance ; and as gently as the case will permit ; and where we must defend or recover our rights ; we do it with the least expence, and the least uneasiness to the adverse party, that may be : that we never be guilty of injustice to others, because they have been guilty of it to us ; and never refuse them proper favours, merely because we have been refused

* Luke xi. 4. † Rom. xiii. 4. ‡ 2 Cor. x. 8. xiii. 10.

refused such favours by them; much less because we have not obtained from them what it was not fit we should: that we look upon little provocations, as trifles: and be careful, not to think great ones greater than they are: that we be willing to make those who have displeased us, all such allowances to the full, as our common frailty and ignorance demand: that we always wish well to them; and be ready, as soon as ever we have real cause, to think well of them: to believe their repentance; and, how great or many soever their faults may have been, to accept it; and restore them to as large a share of our kindness and friendship, as any wise and good person, uninterested in the question, would think safe and right: always remembering, in every case of injury, how very apt we are to err on the severe side; and how very much better it is, to err on the merciful one.

This is the temper of forgiveness to our fellow-creatures: and it is plainly a good and fit temper. Let us therefore now consider further, what influence it will have towards our Maker's forgiving us. Our Saviour undoubtedly lays a peculiar stress on it for this purpose; both by inserting it, as a condition, into the body of his prayer; and insisting on it, as a necessary one, in his words immediately after the prayer. But still, we must observe, he doth not mention it as the cause, that procures our forgiveness: for *God saveth us, not by this, or any other works of righteousness, which we do, but according to his mercy; which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ; that being justified by his grace, we may be heirs of eternal life**. Our pardoning others is no more than a qualification, requisite to our receiving that final pardon from God, which our Saviour, through the Divine goodness, hath merited by his death, on that condition. Nor is it the only qualification necessary, though it be a principal one. For the rest of God's laws were given in vain, if observing this one would secure his favour: and *Christ* would be found *the minister of sin*†, if he had taught, that the single good disposition of forgiveness would be sufficient, let a person have ever so many bad ones. But it is plain, that throughout the whole sermon on the mount, in which this prayer is delivered, he makes the performance of every part of our duty the condition of

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* Tit. iii. 5,—7.

† Gal. ii. 17

our acceptance. In the very beginning of it, he hath promised heaven to several other virtues, as well as here to this; and the meaning is, not that persons may get thither by any one that they will; for nobody sure is so bad, as to have none at all: but that each of them shall have its proper share, in fitting us for that mercy and reward, which however, with less of them we shall never obtain. Our imperfections in all will indeed be pardoned: but not our continuance in a wilful neglect of any.

Still, though a spirit of forgiveness to our brother is by no means the whole, that God requires in order to forgive us; yet it is a quality, often so difficult, always so important, and so peculiarly needful to be exercised by us, when we are intreating our Maker to exercise it towards us; that our Saviour had great reason to place it in the strong light, which he hath done; and even to place it single; since his design could not easily be understood to be any other, than to engage our particular attention to what deserves it so much. For if we will not, for the love of God, and in obedience to his command, pardon our fellow-creatures the few and small injuries, which they are able to do us: (when perhaps we may have done many things to provoke them, and comparatively can have done little to oblige or serve them) how should we ever expect, that he will forgive us the numerous and heinous offences, which we have committed against him; from whom we have received all that we have, on whom we depend for all that we can hope for, to whom therefore we owe the most unreserved duty, and the most affectionate gratitude?

Let us remember then, that since we pray to be forgiven, only as we forgive; so often as we use these words, we pray in effect for God's vengeance upon ourselves, instead of his mercy, if we forgive not. And therefore, let us apply to him continually for grace to do in earnest, what we profess to do in this petition: let us carefully examine our hearts and our conduct, that we may not cheat ourselves, for we cannot cheat God, with false pretences of observing this duty, while indeed we transgress it; let us utterly *put away from us, all bitterness, and wrath, and clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malice; and be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another; even as we hope, that God, for Christ's sake, will forgive us* *.

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* Eph. iv. 31 32.

LECTURE XXXIII.

And lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil : for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

WE should be very unfit to ask for the pardon of our past sins ; and could neither hope to obtain it, nor indeed continue long the better for it ; if we did not earnestly desire, at the same time, to avoid sin for the future. And therefore, after the petition, *forgive us our trespasses*, most properly follows, *and lead us not into temptation*.

The word *temptation* very often signifies no more, than trial ; any opposition or difficulty, that may call forth our virtues into vigorous practice, and, by so doing, both strengthen and make them known : not indeed to God, who always knows our hearts ; but to ourselves and others : to those around us at present ; to all mankind, and the holy angels hereafter. Now in this general sense, our whole life on earth is, and was intended to be, a state of temptation : in which, as the scripture expresses it, *God himself tempts men* * ; that is, proves and exercises them. And accordingly, St James directs us to *count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations* ; adding a very good reason for it : *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life ; which the Lord hath promised to those that love him* †. The more love to God we thus show, the more we exert our inward good principles and habits, and by exerting, improve them : the greater reward we shall obtain. When therefore we say, *Lead us not into temptation* ; we do not pray, that we may not be tried at all : for we know, that we must, even for our own good.

But the word here stands for dangerous trials, provocations,
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* Gen. xxii. 1. Deut. iv. 34. 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

† Jam. i. 2, 12.

and enticements to sin; under which we are likely to sink, instead of overcoming them. Now there is indeed scarce any thing in life, that may not be a temptation to us, in this bad sense. Our tempers, our ages, our stations, and employments in the world, be they ever so different, may, each in their different ways, risk our innocence. They that are poor, are grievously tempted, either to repine against God; or take unlawful methods of relieving themselves. And *they, that will be rich*, experience, as well as the apostle, may teach us, *fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts**. Both adversity and prosperity, business and leisure, company and solitude, have their respective hazards. And sometimes these hazards are so dreadfully heightened by particular circumstances; and, at others, trying incidents, totally unforeseen, happen so unseasonably; that, though they may only rouse and animate our virtue; yet they may also, more probably, overbear, and destroy it. And therefore we must know very little of our natural frailty, the strength of our passions, and *the deceitfulness of sin* †; if we do not think it the more prudent, as well as modest part, to decline, than venture the conflict, if it be God's will: and do not accordingly beg of him, that he would *not lead us into such temptation*.

God, indeed, *tempts no man* ‡, in the sense of alluring and inviting him to sin; as the devil, and wicked people, and our own bad hearts do. And therefore to pray, in this sense, that he would *not lead us into temptation*, would be great irreverence, instead of piety: for it is inconsistent with the holiness of his nature, that he should. But as nothing comes to pass, but with his knowledge and sufferance; and every thing is subject to his direction and superintendency: the scripture speaks, as if every thing was done by him, when the meaning, as appears by other passages of it, is only to acknowledge, that nothing is done without him: and, agreeably to the manner of speaking in the eastern countries, things are ascribed to him, which he only permits, and afterwards turns to the furtherance of his own good purposes. Now God may very justly permit us to be led into the severest temptations, if we do not pray to him against it: because a great part of the danger proceeds from that weakness, which we have wilfully, or carelessly

* 1 Tim. vi. 9.

† Heb. iii. 13.

‡ James i. 13.

lessly brought upon ourselves; and prayer is one of the means, that he hath appointed for our preservation and relief: which means, if we use as we ought, *he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it* *.

But if, through pride or negligence, we will not ask for his help, we must not expect it. And though we do for form's sake ask it, if we have little faith in it, or dependance on it, St James hath foretold the event: *Let not that man think, that he shall receive any thing of the Lord* †. Yet, on the other hand, if we carry our dependance so far, as presumptuously to run into those dangers, out of which we beg him to keep us; or, at least, will do little or nothing to keep ourselves out of them, instead of doing every thing that we can; or if, in the dangers in which he may think fit to place us, we will not use our best endeavours to stand, as well as pray that we may not fall; such prayers can never be likely to avail for our protection. But fervent devotion, hearty resolution, and prudent care, united and continued, will do any thing. By whatever difficulties we are surrounded, and how little possibility soever we may see of getting through them; still, *commit thy way unto the Lord, put thy trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass* ‡.

In the second part of this petition, *But deliver us from evil*; the word *evil* may signify, either sin and its consequences; or the great tempter to sin, the *evil or wicked one*; for by that name the devil is often called in the New Testament §. The number indeed of wicked spirits is probably very great: but notwithstanding this, being united, under one head, in one design of obstructing our salvation, they are all comprehended under one name. And since, in our present state of trial, we have *not* only, as experience shows, *flesh and blood to wrestle against*; our own bad disposition, and the solicitations of a bad world to resist; but also, as the word of God informs us, *principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places* ||, an army of invisible enemies, employing to overcome us, and not less formidably because imperceptibly, all the stratagems that Heaven allows them to use; this, as it increases our danger, may well quicken our prayers for safety and deliverance. That
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* 1 Cor. x. 13. † Jam. i. 7. ‡ Psal. xxxvii. 5. § Mat. xiii. 19, 38.

|| 1 John ii. 13, 14. iii. 12. v. 18. || Eph. vi. 11, 12.

there should be evil angels, as well as evil men, of the greatest abilities and accomplishments, is, if rightly considered, no great wonder : and that both should entice us to sin, is no reasonable discouragement : for let us but apply to God, and we shall not be left in the power of either. What the power of wicked spirits is, we are not told in scripture : and it is no part of religion, in the least, to believe idle stories about them. Of this we are sure, that they have no power, but what God permits : and he will never permit them to do, what shall prove, in the end, any hurt to those, who serve and fear him. More especially we are sure, that they cannot in the least, either force us into sinning, or hinder us from repenting. Invite or dissuade us they may, by suggesting false notions of the pleasure, or profit, or harmlessness of sin : by representing God, as too good to be angry, or too severe to be reconciled : by describing to our imaginations, repentance to be so easy at any time, that it is needless now ; or so difficult now, that it is too late and impossible : by putting it into our thoughts, that we are so good, we may be confident and careless ; or so wicked, we must absolutely despair. It concerns us therefore greatly, *not to be ignorant of their devices* *. But, provided we keep on our guard ; earnestly apply to God, and are true to ourselves ; neither their temptations, nor those of the whole world, shall prevail against us. For then only, as St James gives us to understand, *is every man tempted dangerously, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed* †. The enemy within therefore is the most formidable one : and against this it is chiefly, that we are to *watch, and pray, that we enter not into temptation* : remembering always, that how *willing soever the Spirit* may be, yet *the flesh is weak* ‡.

And now let us observe, in the last place, under this head, that as we are to pray against being led into temptation ourselves, we should be very careful, never to lead others into it ; but do every thing that we can, to keep them out of it, and deliver them from it : and that, as begging God's help that we may stand, must be grounded on a strong sense of our proneness to fall ; we should show great compassion towards them, who, through the same proneness, have fallen. *Brethren, if a man*

* 2 Cor. ii. 11.

† James i. 14.

‡ Mat. xxvi. 41.

man be overtaken in a fault; ye, which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness: considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

Thus we have gone through the six petitions, which compose the second part of the Lord's Prayer; and shown it to be worthy of its Author, by distinctly comprehending, in so little room, whatever is necessary for the honour of God, and our own good, both temporal and spiritual. What remains further, is, to speak briefly of the third part, which concludes the whole, by ascribing to our heavenly Father the praise *due unto his name* †: acknowledging here more expressly, what indeed hath been throughout implied, that his *is the kingdom*, the rightful authority and supreme dominion over all: his *the power*, by which every thing just and good is brought to pass; his therefore *the glory* of whatever we his creatures do, or enjoy, or hope for; of whatever this universe, and the whole scheme of things which it comprehends, hath had, or now hath, or ever shall have in it, awful or gracious, and worthy of the admiration of men and angels. And as all dignity and might and honour are his; so they are his *for ever and ever*: originally, independently and unchangeably. *From everlasting to everlasting he is God* ‡: *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever* §.

These words then are, at once, an act of homage to his greatness, and thanksgiving to his goodness: both which ought ever to have a place in our prayers; and the conclusion is a very proper place. For the infinite perfections of God our Maker, which we thus celebrate, are the best reason possible for every petition that we have offered to him: and therefore our blessed Lord introduces them as the reason. *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory*. Besides, ending with these acknowledgments will leave them fresh and strong upon our minds: especially as we finish all with that solemn asseveration, *Amen*: which is a word used in scripture, only upon serious and important occasions, to confirm the truth and sincerity of what is promised, wished, or affirmed. It relates therefore equally to the whole of the prayer: and is in effect declaring, that we do heartily believe whatever we have said, and heartily desire whatever we have asked.

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* Gal. vi. 1.

† Psal. xxix. 2.

‡ Psal. xc. 2.

§ Heb. xiii. 8.

This expression therefore may remind us, that our prayers should always be composed, both in such a language, and such words in that language, as all, that are to use or join in them, are well acquainted with. For else, as St Paul argues, *How shall he, that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say Amen : seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest* * ?

And it should likewise remind us very strongly of another thing, if possible, yet more important : that we should never say to God, what we cannot say with the utmost truth of heart. Now with what truth, or what face, can any person, that lives in any sin, repeat the prayer which our Lord hath taught us, and say *amen* to it ; when every sentence in it, if well considered, is inconsistent with a bad life ? Let us therefore consider both it and ourselves very carefully, that we may offer up our devotions always in an acceptable manner. For *the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord : but the prayer of the upright is his delight* †.

* 1 Cor. xiv. 16.

† Prov. xv. 8.

LECTURE XXXIV.

The nature and number of the Sacraments.

THE far greatest part of the duties which we owe to God, flow, as it were, of themselves, from his nature and attributes, and the several relations to him, in which we stand, whether made known to us by reason or scripture. Such are those, which have been hitherto explained to you : the ten commandments ; and prayer for the grace, which our fallen condition requires, in order to keep them. But there are still some other important precepts peculiar to Christianity, and deriving their whole obligation from our Saviour's institution of them : concerning which it is highly requisite that our catechism

techism should instruct us, before it concludes. And these are the two sacraments.

The word *sacrament*, by virtue of its original in the Latin tongue, signifies any sacred or holy thing or action: and among the heathens was particularly applied to denote sometimes a pledge, deposited in a sacred place*; sometimes an oath, the most sacred of obligations; and especially that oath of fidelity, which the soldiery took to their general. In scripture it is not used at all. By the early writers of the western church it was used to express almost any thing relating to our holy religion; at least any thing that was figurative, and signified somewhat further than at first sight appeared. But afterwards a more confined use of the word prevailed by degrees: and in that stricter sense, which hath long been the common one, and which our catechism follows, the nature of a sacrament comprehends the following particulars.

1. There must be *an outward and visible sign*: the solemn application of some bodily and sensible thing or action, to a meaning and purpose which in its own nature it hath not. In common life, we have many other signs to express our meanings, on occasions of great consequence, besides words. And no wonder then, if, in religion, we have some of the same kind.

2. In a sacrament, the outward and visible sign must denote *an inward and spiritual grace given unto us*: that is, some favour freely bestowed on us from Heaven; by which our inward and spiritual condition, the state of our souls, is made better. Most of the significative actions, that we use in religion, express only our duty to God. Thus kneeling in prayer is used to show our reverence towards him to whom we pray. And signing a child with the cross, after it is baptized, declares our obligation not to be ashamed of the cross of Christ. But a sacrament, besides expressing, on our part, duty to God, expresses, on his part, some grace or favour towards us.

3. In order to intitle any thing to the name of a sacrament, a further requisite is, that it be *ordained by Christ himself*. We may indeed use, on the foot of human authority alone, actions,

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* Eden. Elem. Jur. Civ. p. 238. Gronov. in Plaut. Rud. 5. 3, 21.

that set forth either our sense of any duty, or our belief in God's grace. For it is certainly as lawful to express a good meaning by any other sign as by words. But then, such marks as these, which we commonly call ceremonies, as they are taken up at pleasure, may be laid aside again at pleasure; and ought to be laid aside, whenever they grow too numerous, or abuses are made of them, which cannot easily be reformed: and this hath frequently been the case. But sacraments are of perpetual obligation: for they stand on the authority of Christ; who hath certainly appointed nothing to be for ever observed in his church, but what he saw would be for ever useful. Nor doth every appointment of Christ, though it be of perpetual obligation, deserve the name of a sacrament: but those, and no other, which are.

4. Not only signs of grace, but *means* also, *whereby we receive the same*. None but our blessed Lord could appoint such means: and which of his ordinances should be such, and which not, none but himself could determine. From his word therefore we are to learn it: and then, as we hope to attain the end, we must use the means. But when it is said, that the sacraments are means of grace; we are not to understand, either that the performance of the mere outward action doth, by its own virtue, produce a spiritual effect in us; or that God hath annexed any such effect to that alone: but that he will accompany the action with his blessing, provided it be done as it ought; with those qualifications which he requires. And therefore, unless we fulfil the condition, we must not expect the benefit.

Further; calling the sacraments, means of grace, doth not signify them to be means by which we merit grace: for nothing but the sufferings of our blessed Saviour can do that for us; but means, by which what he hath merited is conveyed to us.

Nor yet are they the only means of conveying grace: for reading, and hearing, and meditating upon the word of God, are part of the things which he hath appointed for this end: and prayer is another part, accompanied with an express promise, that, if we *ask*, we *shall receive* *. But these, not being such actions as figure out and represent the benefits which they

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* John xvi. 24.

derive to us, though they are means of grace, are not signs of it; and therefore do not come under the notion of sacraments.

But,

5. A sacrament is not only a sign or representation of some heavenly favour, and a means whereby we receive it, but also *a pledge to assure us thereof*. Not that any thing can give us a greater assurance, in point of reason, of any blessing from God, than his bare promise can do: but that such observances, appointed in token of his promises, affect our imaginations with a stronger sense of them: and make a deeper and more lasting, and therefore more useful, impression on our minds. For this cause, in all nations of the world, representations by action have ever been used as well as words, upon solemn occasions: especially upon entering into and renewing treaties and covenants with each other. And therefore in condescension to a practice, which, being so universal among men, appears to be founded in the nature of man; God hath graciously added to his covenant also, the solemnity of certain outward instructive performances; by which he declares to us, that as surely as our bodies are washed by water, and nourished by bread broken and wine poured forth and received; so surely are our souls purified from sin by the baptism of repentance; and strengthened in all goodness, by partaking of that mercy, which the wounding of the body of Christ, and the shedding of his blood, hath obtained for us. And thus these religious actions, so far as they are performed by God's minister, in pursuance of his appointment, are an earnest or pledge on his part, which (as I observed to you) was one ancient signification of the word sacrament: and so far as we join in them, they are an obligation, binding like an oath, on our part, as shall be hereafter shown you; which was the other primitive meaning of the word.

Having thus explained to you the description of a sacrament given in the catechism; let us now consider, what things we have in our religion that answer to it. For the Papists reckon no less than seven sacraments. And though this number was not named for above 1000 years after Christ; nor fixed by the authority of even their own church, till 200 years ago, that is, since the Reformation; yet now they accuse us for not agreeing with them in it, but acknowledging only two.

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The first of their five is Confirmation. And if this be a sacrament, we administer it as well as they, indeed much more agreeably to the original practice; and are therefore intitled, at least to the same benefit from it. But though Christ did indeed *put his hands on children, and bless them**; yet we do not read, that he appointed this particular ceremony for a means of conveying grace. And though the apostles did use it after him, as others had done before him; yet there is no foundation to ascribe any separate efficacy to the laying on of hands, as distinct from the prayers that accompany it: or to look upon the whole of confirmation as any thing else, than a solemn manner of persons taking upon themselves their baptismal vow, followed by the solemn address of the Bishop and the congregation, that they may ever keep it: in which addresses, laying on of hands is used, partly as a mark of goodwill to the person for whom the prayers are offered up; and partly also as a sign, that the fatherly hand of God is over all who undertake to serve him: yet without any claim of conveying his grace particularly by it; but only with intention of praying for his grace along with it: which prayers however we have so just ground to hope he will hear, that they who neglect this ordinance, though not a sacrament, are greatly wanting both to their interest and their duty.

Another sacrament of the Church of Rome is Penance; which they make to consist of particular confession to the priest of every deadly sin, particular absolution from him, and such acts of devotion, mortification, or charity, as he shall think fit to enjoin. But no one part of this being required in scripture, much less any outward sign of it appointed, or any inward grace annexed to it; there is nothing in the whole that hath any appearance of a sacrament; but too much suspicion of a contrivance to gain undue influence and power.

A third sacrament of theirs is, extreme unction. But their plea for it is no more than this. St James, at a time when miraculous gifts were common, directed *the elders of the church*, who usually had those gifts, to *anoint the sick with oil*†: as we read the disciples did, whilst our Saviour was on earth‡; in order to obtain by the *prayer of faith*, (that *faith* which could *remove mountains*§) the recovery, if God saw fit, of their
bodily

* Mark x. 16.

† James v. 14, 15.

‡ Mark vi. 13.

§ Mat. xvii. 20. xxi. 21. Mark xi. 23.

bodily health; and the forgiveness of those sins for which their disease was inflicted, if they had committed any such. And upon this the Church of Rome, now all such miraculous gifts are ceased, continues notwithstanding to anoint the sick, for a quite different purpose: not at all for the recovery of their health; for they do not use it till they think them very nearly, if not quite past recovery; nor indeed for the pardon of their sins, for these, they say, are pardoned upon confession, which commonly is made before it; but chiefly, as themselves own, to procure composedness and courage in the hour of death: a purpose not only unmentioned by St James, but inconsistent with the purpose of recovery, which he doth mention, and very often impossible to be attained. For they frequently anoint persons after they are become intirely senseless. And yet, in spite of all these things, they will needs have this practice owned for a sacrament: which indeed is now, as they manage it, a mere piece of superstition.

Another thing, which they esteem a Christian sacrament, is matrimony: though it was ordained, not by Christ, but long before his appearance on earth, in the time of man's innocency; and hath no outward sign appointed in it, as a means and pledge of inward grace. But the whole matter is, that they have happened most ridiculously to mistake their own Latin translation of the New Testament: where St Paul, having compared the union between the first married pair, Adam and Eve, to that between Christ, the Second Adam, and his Spouse the Church; and having said that *this is a great mystery* *; a figure, or comparison, not fully and commonly understood: the old Interpreter, whose version they use, for *mystery* hath put *sacrament*: which in his days, as I said before, signified any thing in religion that carried a hidden meaning: and they have understood him of what we now call a sacrament. Whereas if every thing that once had that name, in the larger sense of the word, were at present to have it in a stricter sense; there would be a hundred sacraments, instead of the seven, which they pretend there are.

The fifth and last thing, which they wrongly insist on our honouring with this title, is holy orders. But, as there are three Orders in the Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; here

* Eph. v. 32.

here would be three sacraments, if there were any : but indeed there is none. For the laying on of hands in ordination is neither appointed, nor used, to convey or signify any spiritual grace : but only to confer a right of executing such an office in the church of Christ. And though prayers, for God's grace and blessing on the person ordained, are indeed very justly and usefully added ; and will certainly be heard, unless the person be unworthy ; yet these prayers, on this occasion, no more make what is done a sacrament, than any other prayers for God's grace, on any other occasion.

However, as I have already said of confirmation, so I say now of orders and marriage, if they were sacraments, they would be as much so to us, as to the Romanists, whether we called them sacraments or not. And if we used the name ever so erroneously, indeed if we never used it at all ; as the scripture hath never used it ; that could do us no harm, provided, under any name, we believe but the things, which Christ hath taught ; and do but the things which he hath commanded : for on this, and this alone, depends our acceptance, and eternal salvation.

LECTURE XXXV.

Of Baptism.

HAVING already explained to you the nature of a sacrament ; and shown you, that five of the seven things, which the church of Rome calls by that name, are not intitled to it ; there remain only two that are truly such ; and these two are plainly sufficient : one, for our entrance into the Christian covenant ; the other during our whole continuance in it : *Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord*. However, as the word sacrament is not a scripture one, and hath at different times been differently understood : our catechism doth not require

quire it to be said absolutely, that the sacraments are *two only*; but *two only necessary to salvation*: leaving persons at liberty to comprehend more things under the name, if they please, provided they insist not on the necessity of them, and of dignifying them with this title. And even these two, our church very charitably teaches us not to look upon as indispensably, but as *generally necessary*. Out of which general necessity, we are to except those particular cases, where believers in Christ, either have not the means of performing their duty in respect to the sacraments, or are innocently ignorant of it, or even excusably mistaken about it.

In explaining the sacrament of *baptism*, I shall speak, first of *the outward and visible sign*, then of *the inward and spiritual grace*.

As to the former; Baptism being intended for the sign and means of our purification from sin; water, the proper element for purifying and cleansing, is appointed to be used in it. There is indeed a sect, sprung up amongst us within a little more than an hundred years, that deny this appointment: and make the Christian Baptism signify only the pouring out of the gift of the Holy Ghost upon a person. But our Saviour expressly requires that we be *born of water*, as well as *of the Spirit*, to *enter into the kingdom of God**. And not only John, his forerunner, *baptized with water*†, but his disciples also, by his direction, *baptized* in the same manner, even *more than John*‡. When therefore he bade them afterwards *teach all nations, baptizing them*§: what baptism could they understand, but that, in which he had employed them before? And accordingly, we find they did understand that. Philip, we read, baptized the Samaritans||: not with the Holy Ghost; for the apostles went down some time after to do that themselves¶: but with water undoubtedly, as we find in the same chapter, he did the Eunuch: where the words are, *Here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? And they went down to the water: and he baptized him**. Again, after Cornelius, and his friends, had received the Holy Ghost, and so were already baptized in that sense, Peter asks, *Can any man forbid water,*
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* John iii. 5. † Mat. iii. 11. ‡ John iv. 1, 2. § Mat. xxviii. 19.

|| Acts viii. 12. ¶ Ver. 14, &c. * Ver. 36 38.

that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we *? When therefore John says, that he baptized with water, but Christ shall baptize with the Holy Ghost †; he means, not that Christians should not be baptized with water, but that they should have the Holy Ghost poured out upon them also, in a degree that John's disciples had not. When St Peter says, *The baptism which saveth us, is not the washing away the filth of the flesh ‡*; he means, it is not the mere outward act, unaccompanied by a suitable inward disposition. When St Paul says, that Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel §; he means, that preaching was the principal thing he was to do in person: to baptize, he might appoint others under him; and it seems, commonly did: as St Peter did not baptize Cornelius and his friends himself, but commanded them to be baptized ||; and we read in St John, that Jesus baptized not, but his disciples ¶.

Water-baptism therefore is appointed. And why the Church of Rome should not think water sufficient in baptism, but aim at mending what our Saviour hath directed, by mixing oil and balsam with it, and dipping a lighted torch into it, I leave them to explain.

The precise manner in which water shall be applied in baptism, scripture hath not determined. For the word, *baptize*, means only to wash: whether that be done by plunging a thing under water, or pouring the water upon it. The former of these; burying, as it were, the person baptized, in the water and raising him out of it again, without question was anciently the more usual method: on account of which, St Paul speaks of baptism, as representing both the death, and burial, and resurrection of Christ, and what is grounded on them, our being *dead and buried to sin*; renouncing it, and being acquitted of it; and our rising again, to *walk in newness of life* *; being both obliged and enabled to practise, for the future, every duty of piety and virtue. But still, the other manner of washing, by pouring or sprinkling of water, sufficiently expresses the same two things: our being by this ordinance purified from the guilt of sin, and bound and qualified to keep ourselves pure from the defilement of it. Besides, it very naturally

* Acts x. 47. † Mat. iii. 11. ‡ 1 Pet. iii. 21. § 1 Cor. i. 17.

|| Acts x. 48. ¶ John iv. 2. * Rom. vi. 4, 11. Col. ii. 12.

rally represents that *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ* *, to which our salvation is owing. And the use of it seems not only to be foretold by the Prophet Isaiah, speaking of our Saviour, *He shall sprinkle many nations* †, that is, many shall receive his baptism; and by the Prophet Ezekiel, *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean* ‡: but to be had in view also by the apostle, where he speaks of *having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water* §. And though it was less frequently used in the first ages, it must almost of necessity have been sometimes used: for instance, when baptism was administered, as we read in the Acts it was, to several thousands at once ||; when it was administered on a sudden in private houses, as we find it, in the same book, to the goaler and all his family, the very night in which they were converted ¶: or when sick persons received it; in which last case, the present method was always taken, because the other of dipping them, might have been dangerous. And from the same apprehension of danger in these colder countries, pouring the water is allowed, even when the person baptized is in health. And the particular manner being left at liberty, that is now universally chosen, which is looked on as safer: because, were there more to be said for the other than there is, *God will have mercy, and not sacrifice* *.

But washing with water is not the whole outward part of this sacrament. For our Saviour commanded his apostles, not only to *baptize all nations*, but to *baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* †. Sometimes indeed the scripture speaks of baptism, as if it were administered only *in the Name of the Lord Jesus* ++. But it fully appears ∞, that the Name of the Holy Ghost, was used at the same time: and therefore that of the Father, we may be sure. Now, being baptized *in the Name* of these three may signify, being baptized by virtue of their authority. But the exacter translation is, *into the Name*: and the fuller import of the expression is, by this solemn action taking upon us their name; (for servants are known by the name of their

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* 1 Pet. i. 2. † Isa. lii. 15. ‡ Ezek. xxxvi. 25. § Heb. x. 22.

|| Acts ii. 41. ¶ Acts xvi. 33. * Hof. vi. 6. Mat. ix. 13. xii. 7.

† Mat. xxviii. 19. ++ Acts ii. 38. x. 48. xix. 5. ∞ Acts xix. 2, 3.

Master) and professing ourselves devoted to the faith, and worship, and obedience of these three; our Creator, our Redeemer, our Sanctifier. In this profession, the whole of Christianity is briefly comprehended, and on this foundation therefore the ancient Creeds are all built.

The second and principal thing in baptism, *the inward and spiritual grace*, is said in the catechism to be, *a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness: for that being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.* The former part of these words refers to the old custom of baptizing by dipping, just now mentioned: and the meaning of the whole is this. Our first parents having, by disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit, corrupted their own nature; ours, being derived from them, received of necessity an original taint of the same disorder: and therefore coming into the world under the ill effects of their sin; and being, from the time of our entering into it, prone to sin ourselves: we are said to be *born in sin*. And they having also, by the same disobedience, forfeited their immortality; we, as descending from them, became mortal of course: and inheriting by way of natural consequence, what they suffered as a mark of God's wrath; we, their children, are said to be *children of wrath*. Not that God, with whatever disapprobation he must view our native depravity, is, or, properly speaking, can be angry with us personally, for what was not our personal fault. But he might undoubtedly both refuse us that immortality, which our first parents had forfeited, and to which we have no right; and leave us without help, to the poor degree of strength that remained to us in our fallen condition; the effect of which must have been, that had we done our best, as we were intitled to no reward from his justice, so it had been such a nothing, that we could have hoped for little, if any, from his bounty: and had we not done our best, as no man hath, we had no assurance, that even repentance would secure us from punishment. But what in strict justice he might have done, in his infinite goodness he hath not done. For the first covenant being broken by Adam, he hath entered into a new one with mankind, thro' Jesus Christ: in which he hath promised to free us, both from the mortality, which our first parents had brought upon us, by restoring us to life again, and from the inability, by the
powerful

powerful assistance of his Holy Spirit. Nay, further yet, he hath promised, (and without it the rest would have been of small use) that should we, notwithstanding his assistance, fail in our duty, when we might have performed it; as we have all failed, and made ourselves, by that means, *children of wrath*, in the strictest and worst sense: yet, on most equitable terms, he would still receive us to mercy anew. And thus the Christian covenant, delivering us, if we are faithful to it, from every thing we had to fear, and bestowing on us every thing we could hope, brings us into a state so unspeakably different from our former; that it is justly expressed by being dead to that, and born into another. And this new birth being effected by the grace or goodness of God, external and internal, we, the children of it, are properly called *the children of grace*. Now baptism is not only a sign of this grace; (as indeed it signifies very naturally the washing off both of our original corruption, and our actual guilt) but the appointed way of entering into the covenant that entitles us to such grace; the *means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof*.

Indeed the mere outward act of being baptized is, as St Peter, in the words already mentioned, very truly expresses it, the mere *putting away of the filth of the flesh*; unless it be made effectual to save us, as he teaches in the same place it must, by *the answer of a good conscience towards God**: that is, by the sincere stipulation and engagement of *repentance, whereby we forsake sin; and faith, whereby we believe the promises of God, made to us in that sacrament*. For it is impossible that he should forgive us our past sins, unless we are sorry for them, and resolved to quit them: and it is as impossible that we should quit them effectually, unless a firm persuasion of his helping and rewarding us excite and support our endeavours. These two things therefore we see our catechism justly mentions as necessary, in answer to the question, *What is required of persons to be baptized?* Both have been explained in their proper place, and therefore I enlarge on neither here.

But hence arises immediately another question: If these conditions are necessary, *why are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?* And as this difficulty appears to some a great one, I shall give a fuller solution of it than the shortness of a catechism would easily permit.

* 1 Peter iii. 21.

permit. Repentance and faith are requisite, not before they are possible, but when they are possible. Repentance is what infants need not as yet, being clear of personal guilt: and happy would it be, were they never to need it. Faith, it may be reasonably presumed, by the security given for their Christian education, they will have, as soon as they have occasion to exert it. And in the mean time, baptism may very fitly be administered: because God, on his part, can certainly express by it, both his removing, at present, the disadvantages which they lie under by the sin of Adam: and his removing hereafter, on proper conditions, the disadvantages which they may come to lie under by their own sins. And though they cannot, on their parts, expressly promise to perform these conditions; yet they are not only bound to perform them, whether they promise it or not; but (which is the point that our catechism insists on) their sureties promise for them, that they shall be made sensible, as soon as may be, that they are so bound; and ratify the engagement in their own persons: which when they do, it then becomes complete. For it is by no means necessary, that a covenant should be executed, by both the parties to it, at just the same time: and as the Christian Covenant is one of the greatest equity and favour, we cannot doubt, to speak in the language of our Liturgy, *but that God favourably alloweth the charitable work of bringing infants to his holy baptism.* For the promise of the Covenant being expressly said to belong *to us and to our children**, without any limitation of age; why should they not all, since they are to partake of the promise, partake also of the sign of it? especially, since the infants of the Jews were, by a solemn sign, entered into their covenant; and the infants of proselytes to the Jews, by this very sign, amongst others, of baptism. So that, supposing the apostles to imitate either of these examples, as they naturally would, unless they were forbidden, which they were not: when they baptized (as the scripture, without making any exception, tells us they did) whole families at once†; we cannot question but they baptized (as we know the primitive Christians, their successors, did) *little children* among the rest; concerning whom our Saviour says, that *of such is the king-*
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* Acts ii. 39.

† Acts xvi. 15, 33.

*dom of God**: and St Paul says, *they are holy*†; which they cannot be reputed, without entering into the gospel covenant: and the only appointed way of entering into it is by baptism; which therefore is constantly represented in the New Testament as necessary to salvation.

Not that such converts, in ancient times, as were put to death for their faith, before they could be baptized, lost their reward for want of it. Not that such children of believers now, as die unbaptized by sudden illness, or unexpected accidents, or even by neglect, (since it is none of their own neglect) shall forfeit the advantages of baptism. This would be very contrary to that mercy and grace, which abounds thro' the whole of the gospel dispensation. Nay, where the persons themselves do designedly, through mistaken notions, either delay their baptism, as the Anabaptists; or omit it entirely, as the Quakers; even of these it belongs to Christian charity not to judge hardly, as excluded from the gospel covenant, if they die unbaptized; but to leave them to the equitable judgement of God. Both of them indeed err: and the latter especially have, one should think, as little excuse for their error as well can be: for surely there is no duty of Christianity which stands on a plainer foundation, than that of baptizing with water in the Name of the Holy Trinity. But still, since they solemnly declare, that they believe in Christ, and desire to obey his commands; and omit water-baptism only because they cannot see it is commanded; we ought (if we have cause to think they speak truth) by no means to consider them in the same light with total unbelievers.

But the wilful and the careless despisers of this ordinance: who, admitting it to be of God's appointment, neglect it notwithstanding; these are not to be looked on as within his covenant, And such as, though they do observe it for form's sake, treat it as an empty insignificant ceremony, are very unworthy of the benefits which it was intended to convey. And, bad as these things are, little better, if not worse, will be the case of those, who, acknowledging the solemn engagements into which they have entered by this sacrament, live without care to make them good. For to the only valuable purpose,

* Mark x. 14.

† 1 Cor. vii. 14.

purpose, of God's favour and eternal happiness, *he is not a Christian, which is one outwardly; neither is that baptism which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Christian, which is one inwardly; and baptism is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God**.

* Rom. ii. 28, 29.

LECTURE XXXVI.

Of the LORD'S SUPPER.

PART I.

AS by the Sacrament of Baptism we enter into the Christian Covenant; so by that of the Lord's Supper we profess our thankful continuance in it: and therefore the first answer of our catechism, concerning this ordinance, tells us, it was appointed *for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby*. Now the nature and benefits of this sacrifice have been already explained, in their proper places. I shall therefore proceed to show, that the Lord's Supper is rightly said here to be *ordained for a remembrance* of it; not a repetition, as the church of Rome teaches.

Indeed every act, both of worship and obedience, is in some sense a sacrifice to God, humbly offered up to him for his acceptance. And this sacrament, in particular, being a memorial and representation of the sacrifice of Christ, solemnly and religiously made, may well enough be called, in a figurative way of speaking, by the same name with what it commemorates and represents. But that he should be really and literally offered up in it, is the directest contradiction that can be,

not only to common sense, but also to scripture, which expressly says, that he was not to be *offered often, for then must he often have suffered*; but *hath appeared once to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself**; and after that *for ever sat down on the right hand of God*; for *by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified†*.

This ordinance then was appointed, not to repeat, but to commemorate the sacrifice of Christ; which though we are required to do, and do accordingly, more or less explicitly, in all our acts of devotion, yet we are not required to do it by any visible representation, but that of the Lord's Supper: of which therefore our catechism teaches, in the second answer, that *the outward part, or sign, is bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received*. And indeed he hath so clearly commanded both to be received, that no reasonable defence in the least can be made, either for the sect usually called Quakers, who omit this sacrament entirely; or for the Church of Rome, who deprive the laity of one half of it, the cup; and forbid all but the priest to do, what Christ hath appointed all without exception to do. They plead indeed, that all, whom Christ appointed to receive the cup; that is, the apostles; were priests. But their church forbids the priests themselves to receive it, excepting those who perform the service: which the apostles did not perform, but their Master. And besides, if the appointment of receiving the cup belongs only to priests, that of receiving the bread too must relate only to priests: for our Saviour hath more expressly directed *all* to drink of the one, than to eat of the other. But they own, that his appointment obliges the laity to receive the bread: and therefore it obliges them to receive the cup also: which that they did accordingly, 1 Cor. xi. makes as plain as words can make any thing: nor was it refused them for 1200 years after. They plead farther, that administering the holy sacrament is called in scripture, *breaking of bread*, without mentioning the cup at all. And we allow it. But when common feasts are expressed in scripture by the single phrase of *eating bread*, surely this doth not prove that the guests drank nothing: and if, in this religious feast, the like phrase could prove, that the laity did not partake of the cup,

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* Heb. ix. 25, 26.

† Heb. x. 12, 14.

it will prove equally, that the priests did not partake of it either. They plead in the last place, that by receiving the bread, which is the body of Christ, we receive in effect the cup, which is the blood at the same time: for the blood is contained in the body. But here, besides that our Saviour, who was surely the best judge, appointed both; they quite forget that this sacrament is a memorial of his blood being shed out of his body: of which without the cup, there can be no commemoration: or, if there could, the cup would be as needless for the clergy as for the laity.

The outward signs therefore, which Christ hath commanded to be received, equally received, by all Christians, are bread and wine. Of these the Jews had been accustomed to partake, in a serious and devout manner, at all their feasts after a solemn blessing, or thanksgiving to God, made over them, for his goodness to men. But especially at the feast of the Passover, which our Saviour was celebrating with his disciples, when he instituted this holy sacrament; at that feast, in the above-mentioned thanksgiving, they commemorated more at large the mercies of their God, dwelling chiefly however on their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. Now this having many particulars resembling that infinitely more important redemption of all mankind from sin and ruin, which our Saviour was then about to accomplish; he very naturally directed his disciples, that their ancient custom should for the future be applied to this greatest of divine blessings, and become the memorial of *Christ, their Passover, sacrificed for them* *: as indeed the bread broken aptly enough represented his body; and the wine poured forth most expressively figured out his blood, shed for our salvation. These therefore, as the third answer of our catechism very justly teaches, are *the inward part* of this sacrament, *or the thing signified*.

But the Church of Rome, instead of being content with saying, that the bread and wine are signs of the body and blood of Christ, insist on it, that they are turned into the very substance of his body and blood: which imagined change they therefore call transubstantiation. Now, were this true, there would be no outward sign left: for they say, it is converted into the thing signified: and by consequence there would be

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* 1 Cor. v. 7.

no sacrament left: for a sacrament is *an outward sign of an inward grace*.

Besides, if our senses can in any case inform us what any thing is, they inform us that the bread and wine continue bread and wine. And if we cannot trust our senses, when we have full opportunity of using them all; how did the apostles know that our Saviour taught them, and performed miracles; or how do we know any one thing around us? But this doctrine is equally contrary to all reason too. To believe that our Saviour took his own body, literally speaking, in his own hands, and gave the whole of that one body to every one of his apostles, and that each of them swallowed him down their throats, though all the while he continued sitting at the table before their eyes: to believe, that the very same one individual body, which is now in heaven, is also in many thousands of different places on earth; in some, standing still upon the altar; in others carrying along the streets; and so in motion, and not in motion, at the same time: to believe, that the same body can come from a great distance, and meet itself, as the sacramental bread often doth in their processions, and then pass by itself, and go away from itself to the same distance again; is to believe the most absolute impossibilities and contradictions. If such things can be true, nothing can be false; and if such things cannot be true, the church that teaches them cannot be infallible, whatever arts of puzzling sophistry they may use to prove either that or any of their doctrines. For no reasonings are ever to be minded against plain common sense.

They must not say, this doctrine is a mystery. For there is no mystery, no obscurity in it: but it is as plainly seen to be an error, as any thing else is seen to be a truth. And the more so, because it relates, not to any infinite nature, as God; but entirely to what is finite, a bit of bread and a human body. They must not plead, that God can do all things. For that means only that he can do all things that can be done: not that he can do what cannot be done: make a thing be this and not be this, be here and elsewhere, at the same time: which is doing and undoing at once, and so in reality doing nothing. They must not alledge scripture for absurdities, that would sooner prove scripture false, than scripture can prove them true. But it no where teaches them.

We own that our Saviour says, *This is my body which is broken**, and, *This is my blood, which is shed*†. But he could not mean literally. For as yet his body was not broken, nor his blood shed: nor is either of them in that condition now. And therefore the bread and wine neither could then, nor can now, be turned into them as such. Besides our Saviour said at the same time, *This cup is the New Testament in my blood*‡. Was the substance of the cup then changed into the New Testament? And if not, why are we to think the substance of the bread and wine changed into his body and blood? The apostle says, *the Rock*, that supplied the *Israelites* with water in the wilderness, *was Christ*§: that is, represented him. Every body says, such a picture is such a person, meaning the representation of him. Why then may not our Saviour's words mean so too?

The Romanists object, that though what represents a thing naturally, or by virtue of a preceding institution, may be called by its name, yet such a figure as this, in the words of a new institution, would not be intelligible||. But the representation here is natural enough: and though the institution was new, figurative speech was old. And the apostles would certainly rather interpret their Master's words by a very usual figure, than put the absurdest sense upon them that could be. They object further, that if he had not meant literally, he would have said, not, *this*, but *this bread*, is my body¶. But we may better argue, that if he had meant literally, he would have said, in the strongest terms, that he did. For there was great need, surely, of such a declaration. But we acknowledge, that the bread and wine are more than a representation of his body and blood: they are the means, by which the benefits arising from them are conveyed to us; and have thence a further title to be called by their name. For so the instrument, by which a prince forgives an offender, is called his pardon, because it conveys his pardon; the delivery of a writing is called giving possession of an estate*; and a security for a sum of money, is called the sum itself; and is so in virtue

* 1 Cor. xi. 24. † Mat. xxvi. 28. ‡ Luke xxii. 20. § 1 Cor. xi. 25.

¶ 1 Cor. x. 4. || Preuves de la Religion, Vol. IV. p. 166.

¶ Ib. p. 168.

* See Cod. 8. 54. 1.

true and effect, though it is not in strictness of speech, and reality of substance. Again: Our Saviour, we own, says in St John, that *he is the bread of life*; that *his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*: that *who so eateth the one and drinketh the other, hath eternal life*; and that, without doing it, *we have no life in us* *. But this, if understood literally, would prove, not that the bread in the sacrament was turned into his flesh, but that his flesh was turned into bread. And therefore it is not to be understood literally, as indeed he himself gives notice: *The flesh profiteth nothing: the words which I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life* †: It is not the gross and literal, but the figurative and spiritual, eating and drinking; the partaking by a lively faith of an union with me, and being inwardly nourished by the fruits of my offering up my flesh and blood for you, that alone can be of benefit to the soul.

And as this is plainly the sense, in which he says, that *his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*: so it is the sense, in which the latter part of the third answer of our catechism is to be understood; that *the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper*: Words intended to show, that our Church as truly believes the strong assurances of scripture concerning this sacrament, as the Church of Rome doth; only takes more care to understand them in the right meaning: which is, that though, in one sense, all communicants equally partake of what Christ calls his body and blood, that is, the outward signs of them; yet, in a much more important sense, *the faithful* only, the pious and virtuous receiver, eats his flesh and drinks his blood; shares in the life and strength derived to men from his incarnation and death; and through faith in him, becomes by a vital union, one with him; *a member*, as St Paul expresses it, *of his flesh and his bones* ‡: certainly not in a literal sense; which yet the Romanists might as well assert, as that we eat his flesh in a literal sense; but in a figurative and spiritual one. In appearance, the sacrament of Christ's death is given to all alike: but *verily and indeed*, in its beneficial effects, to none besides the faithful. Even to the unworthy communicant he is present, as he is wherever we meet together in his

Name:

* John vi. 48, 53,—55. † Ver. 63. ‡ Eph. v. 30.

Name : but in a better and most gracious sense, to the worthy soul ; becoming, by the inward virtue of his Spirit, its food and sustenance.

This real presence of Christ in the sacrament, his church hath always believed. But the monstrous notion of his bodily presence was started 700 years after his death : and arose chiefly from the indiscretion of preachers and writers of warm imaginations, who, instead of explaining judiciously the lofty figures of scripture language, heightened them, and went beyond them : till both it and they had their meaning mistaken most astonishingly. And when once an opinion had taken root that seemed to exalt the holy sacrament so much, it easily grew and spread ; and the more for its wonderful absurdity, in those ignorant and superstitious ages : till at length, 500 years ago, and 1200 years after our Saviour's birth, it was established for a gospel-truth by the pretended authority of the Romish church. And even this had been tolerable in comparison, if they had not added idolatrous practice to erroneous belief : worshipping, on their knees, a bit of bread for the Son of God. Nor are they content to do this themselves, but with most unchristian cruelty, curse and murder those, who refuse it.

It is true, we also kneel at the sacrament, as they do : but for a very different purpose : not to acknowledge *any corporal presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood* ; as our church, to prevent all possibility of misconstruction, expressly declares ; adding, that *his body is in heaven, and not here* : but to worship him, who is every where present, the invisible God. And this posture of kneeling we by no means look upon, as in itself necessary ; but as a very becoming appointment ; and very fit to accompany the prayer and praises, which we offer up at the instant of receiving ; and to express the inward spirit of piety and humility, on which our partaking worthily of this ordinance, and receiving benefit from it, depend. But the benefits of the holy sacrament, and the qualifications for it, shall, God willing, be the subject of two other discourses. In the mean time, *consider what hath been said ; and the Lord give you understanding in all things* *.

* 2 Tim. ii. 7.

LECTURE XXXVII.

Of the LORD'S SUPPER.

PART II.

THE doctrine of our catechism, concerning the Lord's Supper, hath been already so far explained, as to show you, that it *was ordained*, not for the repetition, but *the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ*; that *the outward signs* in it are bread and wine; both which the Lord hath commanded to be received by all Christians: and both which are accordingly received, and not changed and transubstantiated into the real and natural *body and blood of Christ*: which however *the faithful*, and they only, do, under this representation of it, *verily and indeed* receive into a most beneficial union with themselves; that is, do *verily and indeed*, by a spiritual connection with their incarnate Redeemer and Head through faith, partake, in this ordinance, of that heavenly favour and grace, which by offering up his body and blood he hath procured for his true disciples and members.

But of *what benefits* in particular *the faithful* partake in this sacrament, through the grace and favour of God, our catechism teaches in the fourth answer, to which I now proceed: and which tells us it is, *The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine* *. Now both the truth and the manner of this refreshment of our souls will appear by considering the nature of the sacrament, and the declarations of scripture concerning it.

Indeed the due preparation for it, the self-examination required in order to it, and the religious exercises which that examination

* Αλλα πασαθαι ανωχθι θους επι νηυσιν Αχαις
 Ζιτς και σινις το γαρ μιν εστι και αληη.

Hom. II. T. v. 160, 161.

examination will of course point out to us, must previously be of great service; as you will see, when I come to that head. And the actual participation will add further advantages of unspeakable value.

Considered as an act of obedience to our Saviour's command, *Do this in remembrance of me*, it must be beneficial to us; for all obedience will. Considered as obedience to a command, proceeding principally, if not solely, from his mere will and pleasure; it contributes to form us into a very needful, a submissive, and implicitly dutiful temper of mind. But further: it is the most eminent and distinguished act of Christian worship: consisting of the devoutest thankfulness to God for the greatest blessing, which he ever bestowed on man; attended, as it naturally must, with earnest prayers, that the gift may avail us, to our spiritual and eternal good. And it is much more likely to affect us very strongly and usefully, because it expresses his bounty and our sense of it, not as our daily devotions do in words alone, but in the less common, and therefore more solemn way, of visible signs and representations: *setting forth evidently before our eyes*, to use St Paul's language, *Christ crucified amongst us* *. This, of necessity, unless we are strangely wanting to ourselves, must raise the warmest affections of love that our hearts are capable of, to him who hath given himself for us. And as love is the noblest principle of religious behaviour, what tends so powerfully to animate our love, must in proportion tend to perfect us in every branch of duty, according to the just reasoning of the same apostle: *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and he died for all, that they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him, which died for them, and rose again* †. When our Saviour said to his disciples, *If ye love me, keep my commandments* ‡; he knew the motive was no less engaging, than it is reasonable. And therefore he adds very soon after, *If a man love me he will keep my words* §.

But this institution carries in it a yet further tie upon us; being, as our blessed Lord himself declared, *the New Testament in his blood* ||: the memorial and acknowledgment of the second

* Gal. iii. 1.

† 2 Cor. v. 15, 16.

‡ John xiv. 15.

§ Verse 23.

|| Luke xxii. 20.

cond covenant between God and man, which was founded on his death; and requires a sincere faith and obedience on our part, as the condition of grace and mercy on his. *Every one that nameth the name of Christ*, is bound to *depart from iniquity* *. But the obligation is redoubled on them who come to his table as friends, and *make a covenant with him* by partaking of his *sacrifice* †. If these live wickedly, it is declaring with the boldest contempt, that they consider *Christ as the minister of sin* ‡; and *count the blood of the covenant*, wherewith they profess to be *sanctified, an unholy thing* §. Partaking therefore of this holy ordinance is renewing, in the most awful manner, our engagements to the service which we owe, as well as our claims to the favours that God hath promised. It is our sacrament, our oath to be faithful *soldiers* || under the great *Captain of our salvation* ¶: which surely we cannot take thus, without being efficaciously influenced to the religious observance of it, in every part of a Christian life.

But there is one part especially, and one of the utmost importance, to which this institution peculiarly binds us, that of universal good-will and charity. For commemorating, in so solemn an action, the love of Christ to us all, cannot but move us to that mutual imitation of his love, which, just before his appointing this holy sacrament, he so earnestly and affectionately enjoined his followers, as the distinguishing badge of their profession. *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you* *. Hereby shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another †. Then besides; commemorating his love jointly, as the servants of one Master, and members of one body, partaking of the same Covenant of Grace, and the same hope of everlasting happiness, must, if we have any feeling of what we do, incline us powerfully to that reciprocal union of hearts, which indeed the very act of communicating suggests and recommends to us. *For we, being many, are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread* ++.

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* 2 Tim. ii. 19. † Psal. l. 5. ‡ Gal. ii. 17. § Heb. x. 29.

|| 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4. ¶ Heb. ii. 10. * John xv. 12, 13, 14.

† John xiii. 35.

++ 1 Cor. x. 17.

Another grace, which this commemoration of our Saviour's death peculiarly excites, is humility of soul. We acknowledge by it, that we are sinners ; and have no claim to pardon or acceptance, but through his sacrifice, and his mediation, whose merits we thus plead, and set forth before God. And this consideration must surely dispose us very strongly to a thankful observance of his commands, to watchfulness over our own hearts, to mildness towards others. *For we ourselves also have been foolish, disobedient, deceived : and not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, God hath saved us, which he shed on us abundantly through Christ Jesus our Saviour **.

And as this sacrament will naturally strengthen us in all these good dispositions, we cannot doubt, but God will add his blessing to the use of such proper means, especially being appointed means. For since he hath threatened punishments to unworthy receivers, he will certainly bestow rewards on worthy ones. Our Saviour hath told us, that *his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed †* : sustenance and refreshment to the souls of men. When he blessed the bread and wine, he undoubtedly prayed, and not in vain, that they might be effectual for the good purposes, which he designed should be attained by this holy rite. And St Paul hath told us, if it needs, more expressly, that *the cup, which we bless, is the communion*, that is, the communication to us, *of the blood of Christ ; and the bread, which we break, of the body of Christ ‡* : that is, of a saving union with him, and therefore of the benefits procured to us by his death : which are, forgiveness of our offences ; for he hath said, *This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for the remission of sins §* : Increase of the gracious influences of the Holy Ghost ; for the apostle hath said, plainly speaking of this ordinance, that *we are all made to drink into one Spirit ||* : and everlasting life ; for *who so eateth his flesh, and drinketh his blood, dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in him, and he will raise him up at the last day ¶*. Whence a father of the apostolic age, *Ignatius*, calls the eucharist, *the medicine*

* Tit. iii. 3, 5, 6.

† John vi. 55.

‡ 1 Cor. x. 16.

§ Mat. xxvi. 28.

|| 1 Cor. xii. 13.

¶ John vi. 54, 56.

dicine of immortality; a preservative, that we should not die, but live for ever in Jesus Christ.*

But then what hath been already hinted to you must be always carefully observed; that these benefits are to be expected only from partaking worthily of it: *for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily*, St Paul hath told us, *is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord†*; that is, guilty of irreverence towards it, and *eateth and drinketh judgment to himself‡*. Our translation indeed hath it, *damnation to himself*. But there is so great danger of this last word being understood here in too strong a sense, that it would be much safer, and exacter, to translate it, (as it is often translated elsewhere, and once in a few verses after this passage, and from what follows ought undeniably to be translated here) *judgment, or condemnation*: not to certain punishment in another life, but to such marks of God's displeasure as he sees fit; which will be confined to this world, or extended to the next, as the case requires. For *receiving unworthily* may, according to the kind and degree of it, be either a very great sin, or comparatively a small one. But all dangerous kinds and degrees may with ease be avoided, if we only take care to come to the sacrament with proper dispositions, and, which will follow of course, to behave at it in a proper manner.

To these dispositions our catechism proceeds. But more is needful to be known concerning them than can well be laid before you now. Therefore I shall conclude at present with desiring you to observe, that no unworthiness, but our own, can possibly endanger us, or prevent our receiving benefit. Doubtless it would both be more pleasing and more edifying, to come to *the table of the Lord§* in company with such only as are qualified for a place at it: and they, who are unqualified, ought, when they properly can, to be restrained from it. But we have neither direction nor permission to stay away, because others come who should not: nor can they ever be so effectually excluded, but that *tares* will be mixed among the wheat: and attempting to root them up may often be more hurtful than letting both grow together till the har-

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vest.

* Ign. ad Eph. c. 20. See Waterland on the Eucharist, p. 217.

† 1 Cor. xi. 27. ‡ 1 Cor. xi. 29. § 1 Cor. x. 21.

vest *. Nay, should even *the stewards* and dispensers of *God's mysteries* † be unholy persons, though it be a grievous temptation to others to *abhor the Offering of the Lord* ‡, yet that is holy still. *They shall bear their iniquity*: but notwithstanding, *all the promises* of all God's ordinances are *yea and amen*, sure and certain, in *Jesus Christ* §, to as many as *worship him in spirit and in truth* ||.

* Matth. xiii. 28,—31. † 1 Cor. iv. 2. ‡ 1 Sam. ii. 17.

§ 2 Cor. i. 10. || John iv. 23.

LECTURE XXXVIII.

Of the LORD'S SUPPER.

PART III.

WHAT qualifications and dispositions are *required* of them who come to the Lord's Supper, the scripture hath not particularly expressed: for they are easily collected from the nature of this ordinance. But our catechism, in its fifth and last answer concerning it, hath reduced them very justly to three: Repentance, faith, and charity.

I. *That we repent us truly of our former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new life.* For as we are by nature prone to sin; and the youngest and best among us have in more instances than a few been guilty of it: the less the better: so in Christianity, repentance is the foundation of every thing. Now the sorrow that we ought to feel for the least sin, must be a very serious one: and for greater offences in proportion deeper. But the vehemence and passionateness of grief will, on every occasion, and particularly on this, be extremely different in different persons. And therefore all that God expects,



pects, is a sincere, though it may be a calm, concern, for every past fault, of which we are conscious, and for the multitudes, which we have either not observed or forgotten. And this concern must proceed from a sense of duty, and produce the good effects of an humble confession to him in all cases, and to our fellow-creatures, in all cases needful; of restitution for the injuries that we have done, so far as it is possible; and of a settled resolution to amend our hearts and lives, wherever it is wanting. More than this we cannot do; and less than this God cannot accept. For it would be giving us a license to disobey him, if he allowed us to come to his table, and profess to *have fellowship with him*, while we *walked in darkness* *. Mere infirmities indeed, and undesigned frailties, provided we strive against them with any good degree of honest care, and humble ourselves in the Divine presence for them, so far as we are sensible of them, will not provoke God to reject us, as unworthy receivers, though, in strictness, we are all unworthy. For if such failures as these made persons unfit, nobody could be fit. And therefore there will be no excuse for omitting what Christ hath commanded: nor can be any reason why we should not do it with comfort.

But whoever lives in any wilful sin, cannot safely come to the holy sacrament: nor, which I beg you to observe, can he safely stay away. For, as the hypocrisy of professing amendment falsely at God's table is a great sin; so the profaneness of turning our backs upon it, because we will not amend, is to the full as great a one: and it is the merest folly in the world to chuse either, as the safer way: for a wicked person can be safe no way. But let him resolve to quit his wickedness: and when he is thoroughly sure, so far as he can judge from a competent experience, that he hath resolved upon it effectually, then he may as safely receive as he can say his prayers. And such a one should come, not with servile fear, as to a hard master; but with willing duty, as to a merciful Father. Nay, should he afterwards break his resolutions, tho' doubtless it would be the justest cause of heavy grief, yet it would not prove that he received unworthily, but only that he hath behaved unworthily since he received. And the thing for him to do is, to lament his fault with deeper contrition,

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* John i. 6,

renew his good purposes more firmly, pray for help from above with more earnestness, watch over himself with more prudent care: then go again to God's altar, thankfully commemorate his pardoning love, and claim anew the benefit of his gracious covenant. Following this course honestly, he will assuredly gain ground. And therefore such, as do not gain ground, do not follow it honestly: but allow themselves to go round in a circle of sinning, then repenting as they call it, and communicating, then sinning again: as if every communion did of course wipe off the old score, and so they might begin a new one without scruple: which is the absurdest, the most irreligious, the most fatal imagination that can be.

II. The next thing, required of them who come to the Lord's Supper, is *a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death*. And the faith necessary is a settled persuasion, that, for the sake of the meritorious obedience and sufferings of our blessed Redeemer, God will pardon true penitents; together with a comfortable trust that we, as such, have an interest in his merits. But here again you must observe, that different persons may have very different degrees of this persuasion and trust. Some may be *weak in faith**; may have cause to say with in the gospel of St Mark, *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief*†; and yet their prayers, like his, may be graciously heard. Others may be *strong*‡, and *increase*§, till they *abound in faith*||. And such have great reason to be thankful to God for themselves; but surely they ought not to judge hardly of their brethren, who have not advanced so far. The rule of judging, both in the catechism and the scripture, is not by the positiveness, but the liveliness, of our faith: that is, the fruits of a Christian life, which it produces: for *faith without works is dead*¶. If we cannot show the evidence of these, the highest confidence will do us no good; and if we can, we need have no doubts concerning our spiritual condition; and though we have ever so many, provided we perceive no sufficient reason for them, we may celebrate this holy ordinance very safely. For such weaknesses in our natural temper and spirits are no way inconsistent with having,

* Rom. xiv. 1.

† Mark ix. 24.

‡ Rom. iv. 20.

§ Luke xvii. 5.

|| Col. ii. 7.

¶ James ii. 17.

having, in our fixed and deliberate judgment, that *full trust in God's mercy*, which the Communion-service requires; and we cannot take a more likely method, either to perfect our repentance or to strengthen our faith, than receiving the sacrament frequently.

Our catechism teaches further, that our faith in Christ must be accompanied *with a thankful remembrance of his death*. And surely, if we believe, that he died to save us, we must be thankful for it. But then the measure of our thankfulness must be taken from the goodness and constancy of its effects, not from that sensible warmth and fervency, which we cannot, ordinarily speaking, feel so strongly in spiritual things as in temporal; and of which bad persons may at times have very much, and good persons little. For that is the true thankfulness, which produces love. And *this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments* *.

But there is one commandment, as I have shewn you, peculiarly connected with this ordinance. And therefore our catechism specifies it separately, and in express terms, by requiring,

III. That we *be in charity with all men*. For we can have no share in the love of our Creator, our Redeemer, and Sanctifier, unless, in imitation of it, we love one another; and, as the goodness of God is universal, so must ours be too. Receiving the holy communion was indeed intended to increase the degree of it; but the reality we must have, before we are worthy to receive. And we must show it is real, by *forgiving them who trespass against us*: by assisting, as far as can be reasonably expected, those who need assistance in any kind; by our hearty prayers for those, whom we can help no other way; by faithfully performing the duties of our several stations and relations in life; and by condescension, mildness, and humanity towards every person, as occasion offers: all which duties, and particularly that of forgiveness, have been explained to you in their proper places.

These then being the dispositions requisite for receiving the holy sacrament, as indeed they are for obtaining eternal happiness; we are all greatly concerned to examine ourselves, whether we have them or not; and should have been concern-

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* 1 John v. 3.

ed to do it, though this ordinance had never been appointed. But we are now more especially bound to it with a view to this ordinance; both from the nature of it, and from St Paul's positive injunction: *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup* *.

The principal subjects of our examination are comprehended under the three heads just now mentioned. But as to any particular method to be taken, or time to be spent in it, or in any further preparation subsequent to it, we have no command: it is left to every one's prudence and voluntary piety. They who live in a constant practice of religion and virtue, are always fit for the sacrament; and may, if the call be sudden, by reflecting for a few moments, sufficiently know that they are fit. Persons who live in any sin, may as quickly know that they are not. And it is only in doubtful cases, that any length of consideration is necessary to satisfy us about this matter. But it must be extremely useful for all persons, not only to be attentive to their ways constantly, but to look back upon them frequently; much more frequently than almost any one receives the sacrament. And as things, which have no certain season fixed for them, are very apt to be neglected; we should fix upon this, as one certain season for as particular an inspection into the state of our hearts and lives as we can well make, and can hope to be the better for; joining with it suitable meditations, resolutions, and devotions. But then in the whole of this work we must be careful, neither to hurry over any part thoughtlessly, nor lengthen it wearisomely. And in our examination we must be especially careful, neither to flatter nor yet to affright ourselves; but observe impartially what is right in us, thank God, and take the comfort of it: acknowledge what is wrong, beg pardon, and amend it. For without amendment, being ever so sorry will avail nothing.

The last thing to be mentioned in relation to this holy sacrament, is our behaviour at it, which ought to be very serious and reverent; such as may show, in the properest manner, that, to use the apostle's words, we *discern* or distinguish *the Lord's body* †; look on the action of receiving it, as one
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* 1 Cor. xi. 28.

† 1 Cor. xi. 29.

of no common nature, but as the religious memorial of our blessed Saviour's dying for us, and by his death establishing with us a covenant of pardon, grace, and everlasting felicity, on God's part; and of faith and holiness, on ours. With this important consideration, we should endeavour to affect our hearts deeply and tenderly; yet neither to force our minds, if we could, into immoderate transports, by which we shall only bewilder and lose, instead of benefiting, ourselves; nor express even what we ought to feel, by any improper singularities of gesture; nor yet be dejected, if we have less feeling, and even less attention to the service, than we have reason to wish. For such things may be, in a great measure at least, natural and unavoidable. Or, supposing them faults; they may be, and often are, the faults of such persons, as, notwithstanding, are, on the whole, very worthy communicants. They may be, for a time, useful means of keeping us humble and watchful; after that, God may deliver us from them; and should we continue all our lives afflicted with them, it would never hinder our receiving all the necessary benefits of this ordinance.

God grant that both it, and all his other gracious institutions, may contribute effectually to *build us up on our most holy faith* in a suitable practice, that so we may ever *keep ourselves in the love of God*; and on good grounds *look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life* *.

* Jude, ver. 20, 21.

LECTURE XXXIX.

The Conclusion.

HAVING now, through God's mercy, carried on these lectures to the end of the catechism, and in some measure explained to you every part of Christian faith and duty

comprehended in it, I have only one instruction more to add, but the most important of all for you to remember and consider well: that, *if ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them**; and miserable are ye, if ye do them not.

We all know indeed by nature, in a great degree, what manner of persons we ought to be in this world: and therefore, if we fail of being such, are in a great degree inexcusable. For how little teaching soever some may have had; yet our Saviour's home question will reach even them: *Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not, what is right*†? *The work of the law is written in the hearts of men, their conscience also bearing witness*‡. Being reasonable creatures, we are evidently bound to govern our passions, appetites, fancies, and whole behaviour, by the rules of reason. And who doth not see, that sobriety, temperance, and modesty, are things perfectly reasonable; and excess, and dissoluteness, and indecency, mischievous and shameful? Being social creatures, we are as evidently bound to whatever will make society happy. And since we are very sensible, that others ought to treat us with justice and kindness, peaceably mind their own business, and diligently provide for their own maintenance; we cannot but be sensible, that we ought to do the same things. Then, lastly, being creatures capable of knowing our Creator, who is *not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being*§: it follows very clearly, that we are not to forget him, but worship and obey him as the Almighty, all-wise, and all good Maker and Lord of the universe; acknowledge our dependance on him, be thankful to him for his mercies, and resign ourselves to his disposal.

Thus much, one should have thought, all men must have known, without supernatural teaching; and certainly they might; and therefore are justly blameable and punishable, if they do not. But still it hath appeared in fact, that wherever men have been left to their own reason, neither every one hath taught himself, nor the wiser part of the world taught the rest, even these plain things; so as to produce any steady regard to them, as duties, or even any settled conviction of them, as truths. And for want of it, sin and misery have prevailed every where. Men have made others and themselves wretched

* John xiii. 17. † Luke xii. 57. ‡ Rom. ii. 15. § Acts xvii. 27, 28.

ed in numberless ways; and often doubly wretched by the reflections of their own hearts; knowing they had done ill, and not knowing how to be sure of pardon.

Foreseeing from eternity these dreadful consequences of human ignorance and wickedness, God provided suitable remedies of instruction and grace; which he notified to the world from time to time, as his own unsearchable wisdom saw would be fittest; increasing the light gradually till it shone out in the full day of Christianity. But revelation, as well as reason, hath been given in vain to a great part of mankind. The propagation of it thro' the earth hath been strangely neglected; in many places, where it hath been received it hath been lost again; and in too many, where it is retained, it is grievously corrupted and obscured. Without question we ought to judge as charitably as we can of all who are in any of these conditions: but at the same time we ought, from the bottom of our hearts, to thank God that none of them is our own. Undoubtedly he is and will be gracious to all his creatures, as far as they are fit objects; but it is *the riches of his grace* *, that he hath bestowed on us; and as, with justice, he might dispose of his own free gifts as he pleased; so, in mercy, he hath conferred a large proportion of them on this nation and age. Blessings, that are common and familiar, tho' indeed much the greater for that, are usually but little regarded. And thus, amongst other things, the opportunities that we enjoy of religious knowledge, it may be feared, are often very lightly esteemed. But would we reflect, how much less means of being acquainted with the duties of this life, and the rewards of another, not only the unenlightened heathen world, but the Jews, the people of God, had formerly; and much the greatest part even of Christians have had for numbers of successive generations, and have still, than we: it would make us feel, that our Saviour's words belong to us also; *Verily, I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them: and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear* †.

But then, and, for the sake of God and our souls, let us observe it; if *seeing we see not, and hearing we hear not* ‡, to the

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* Eph. i. 7. ii. 7.

† Matth. xiii. 16, 17.

‡ Matth. xiii. 13.

only good purpose of life, that of becoming in heart and in practice such as we ought; *better had it been for us, not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after we have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto us**. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required. *The servant that knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes: he that knew it not, with few†*. But take notice; he that, in comparison with others, may be said not to know the will of God, knows enough of it to subject him, if he fails of doing it, to future punishment; *to be beaten with stripes*. Not even a heathen sinner therefore shall escape entirely by his ignorance; much less will that plea excuse a Christian; but least of all can those Christians hope for mercy, who hear the word of God preached to them weekly; have it in their hands, and may read it daily; and yet transgress it. *Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgement‡, than for such persons*.

Let no one argue from hence, that knowledge then is no blessing. For the more we know of our Maker and our duty, the better we are qualified to be good in this world and happy in the next. And we can never be worse for it, unless he will, by making either no use or a bad use of it. Nor let any one imagine, that, though we need not be the worse for our knowledge, yet since we may, ignorance is the safer choice; as what will excuse our sins, if not entirely, yet in a great measure. But let us all remember, it is not pretended, but real ignorance; nor even that, unless we could not help it, that will be any plea in our favour. Wilful, or even careless ignorance, is a great sin itself; and therefore can never procure us pardon for the other sins which it may occasion. What should any one of us think of a servant who kept out of the way of receiving his master's orders, purposely because he had no mind to do them? Nay, supposing him only through negligence not to understand the business that he was required to learn and follow; would this justify him? Would it not be said, that what he might and ought to have known, it was his own fault if he did not know? And what do we think of God,

if

* 2 Pet. ii. 21.

† Luke xii. 47, 48.

‡ Mark vi. 11.

if we hope to impose upon him with pleas that will not pass amongst ourselves?

Fix in your hearts then: the first indispensable duty of man is, to learn the will of his Maker; the next, to do it: and nothing can excuse you from either. Attend therefore diligently on all such means of instruction, as God's providence gives you: especially the public instruction of the church, which, having expressly appointed for you, he will assuredly bless to you; provided you observe our Saviour's most important direction, *Take heed how ye hear**. For on that depends, whether the preaching of the gospel shall be *life or death to you*†. One it must be: and these very lectures, amongst other things, which have been truly intended for your eternal good, will prove, if you apply them not to that end, what God forbid they should, a means of increasing your future condemnation. Be intreated therefore to consider very seriously what you are taught; for be there ever so much of the weakness of man in it, there is the power of God unto salvation, unless you hinder it yourselves. Never despise then the meanest of your instructors; and never think of admiring the ablest: but remember that your business is, neither to applaud nor censure other persons performances; but to improve your own hearts, and mend your own lives. Barely coming and hearing is nothing. Barely being pleased and moved and affected is nothing. It is only minding and doing the whole of your duty, not some part of it alone, that is any thing.

Knowing the words of your catechism is of no other use, than to preserve in your memories the things which those words express. Knowing the meaning of your catechism ever so well, in every part, is of no other use than to put you on the performance of what it teaches. And performing some things ever so constantly or zealously, will not avail, without a faithful endeavour to perform every thing. Have it always in your thoughts therefore, that practice, uniform practice, is the one thing needful. Your knowledge may be very low and imperfect, your faith not very clear and distinct: but however poorly you are capable of furnishing your heads; if your hearts and lives be good, all is well.

But here, I pray you, observe further, that as it is not in
understand-

* Luke viii. 18.

† 2 Cor. ii. 16.

understanding and believing, so it is in devotion merely, that religion consists. The common duties of common life make far the greatest part of what our Maker expects of us. To be honest and sober, and modest and humble, and good tempered and mild, and industrious and useful in our several stations, are things to which all persons are as much bound as they can be to any thing: and when they proceed from a principle of conscience towards God, and are offered up to him, as our bounden duty, through Jesus Christ, are as true and acceptable a service to him, as either our attendance at church, or our prayers in retirement at home. And they, who abound in these latter duties, and neglect any of the former, only disgrace religion, and deceive themselves.

Yet understand me not, I beg you, to speak slightly of devotion, either private or public. On the contrary, I recommend both to you most earnestly: for our immediate duty to God is the highest of all duties, *the first and great commandment* * of natural religion: and the payment of due and distinct regards to the Father Almighty, to his blessed Son, and Holy Spirit, of course obtains an equal rank in revelation. In particular I recommend it to you, not to omit coming to evening prayers, because now these lectures will be discontinued. Joining in God's worship, and hearing his holy word read to you, is always a sufficient, and should always be the principal motive to bring you. For *neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase* †. And we may be sure he will give it to those, who attend on his ordinances with pious minds: and we may justly expect, that he will withhold it from those, who, instead of coming because it is their duty, come to hear this or that man discourse.

But then I must beseech you to observe, at the same time, that as neither piety without morals, nor morals without piety, nor heathen piety without Christian, will suffice; so neither will the outward acts of any thing, without an inward principle of it; and the true principle is a reverent esteem and love of God. Other inducements may allowably be joined with this; but if this be not also joined with them, what we do may be prudence, may be virtue, but is not religion; and therefore,

* Matth. xxii. 38.

† 1 Cor. iii. 7.

therefore, however right, so far as it goes, doth not go far enough to entitle us to reward, or even to secure us from punishment; which nothing can more justly deserve, than to have little or no sense of filial affection to our heavenly Father, and of thankful love to our crucified Redeemer and gracious Sanctifier, who have the highest right to the utmost regard that our souls are capable of feeling.

You must resolve therefore, not only to be Christians externally in your lives, but internally in your hearts. And, let me remind you further, you will resolve on neither to good purpose, if you trust to yourselves alone for the performance. You will contrive, perhaps, great schemes of amendment and goodness, but you will execute very little of them; or you will do a good deal, it may be, in some particulars, and leave others, equally necessary, undone: or you will go on a while, and then fall, when you thought you were surest of standing: or, what seeming progress soever you may make, you will ruin it all, by thinking too highly of yourselves for it: or some way or another you will certainly fail, unless the grace of God enable you, first to be deeply sensible of your own guilt and weakness; then to lay hold, by faith in Christ, on his promised mercy and help; in the strength of that help to obey his commands; and, after all, to know that you are still *unprofitable servants**. Now this grace you may certainly have, in whatever measure you want it, by earnest prayer for it, humble dependance upon it, and such honest and diligent use of the lower degrees of it, as he hath promised to reward with higher degrees; and you can have it no other way. If ever therefore, when we exhort you to duties, moral or religious, we omit to mention the great duty of applying for more strength from above to be given you, not for your own sakes, but that of your blessed Redeemer, in order to practise them, it is by no means because we think such application unnecessary; but because we hope you know it so well to be absolutely necessary, that we need not always remind you of it. But if we are, at any time, wanting to you in this respect or any other, be not therefore wanting to yourselves, but *work out your own salvation* from this motive, which alone will procure you success,

* Luke xvii. 10,

cess, that *God worketh in you both to will and to do**. And I pray God to sanctify you wholly, and preserve your whole spirit, soul, and body blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ†.

Having said thus much for you all in general, I desire you, children, to take notice of what I am going to say, in the last place, to you in particular. Your condition is of the lower kind; but your instruction hath been better than many of your superiors have had. If therefore your behaviour be bad, your condemnation will be heavy; and if it be good, you may be to the full as happy in this world and the next, as if you were of ever so high rank. For true happiness comes only from doing our duty, and none will ever come from transgressing it; but, whatever pleasure or profit sin may promise, they will soon turn into pain and loss. Remember therefore, as long as you live, what you have been taught here. Remember particularly the answers to those two main questions: *What is thy duty towards God?* and, *what is thy duty towards thy neighbour?* And be assured, that unless you practise both, when you go hence to services and apprenticeships, all the money and labour, that hath been spent on you, will be spent in vain; you will be a disgrace to the education and teaching that you have had; you will probably be very miserable here, and certainly so for ever hereafter. But, if you practise both, you will make an honest and grateful return for the kindness that you have received from your benefactors; which I hope you will never forget, but imitate, if God enables you to do it; you will be loved of your Maker and fellow-creatures; you will live in peace of mind, you will die with comfort, and be received into everlasting bliss.

Think then, I entreat and charge you, seriously and often of these things. And, to remind yourselves of them more effectually, be diligent in reading such good books as are given you at your leaving school, or otherwise put into your hands; be constant in coming to church, on the Lord's day at least: such of you as go away before you are confirmed, take the first opportunity, after you are fourteen, to apply to your minister, wherever you are, that you may be well instructed
for

* Phil. ii. 12, 13.

† 1 Thess. v. 23.

for that holy ordinance, and then admitted to it. Within a reasonable time after this, prepare yourselves, and desire him and your friends to assist in preparing you to receive the Lord's Supper : concerning which you have heard very lately, how expressly it is required of all Christians, (a name that comprehends young as well as old) for the means of improving them in every thing that is good. And may God give his grace to you and to us all, that by the help of those means, with which he hath so plentifully favoured us, we may each of us improve daily in the knowledge of his truth, and the love of our duty, *till at length we come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ* *.

* Eph iv. 13.

AN
ANSWER
TO
DR MAYHEW'S OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
CHARTER AND CONDUCT
OF THE
SOCIETY
FOR THE
PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS.

DR MAYHEW's * book is written, partly against the Church of England in general; partly against the conduct of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in settling ministers of that church in the Massachusetts and Connecticut; partly against appointing bishops to reside in his Majesty's American Colonies. The first, though not formally proposed by him as one head of his work, appears to be in his view throughout the whole of it. And if satisfaction be previously

* The quotations out of Dr Mayhew's observations are taken from the English edition, which contains 147 pages. The American hath 176 pages.

viously given to candid persons on this point, they will be better prepared for considering the other two.

He objects against the Constitution and Worship of the Church of England, as unscriptural*. Now, even had he attempted to bring proof of this, it would only lead into a long dispute, very little connected with his professed subject, and *into which*, he declares, *it was by no means his design to enter*†. But, instead of proofs, he contents himself with bold assertions, reproachful names, and ludicrous representations; a likely method indeed to please the prejudiced, and carry the thoughtless along with him, but not to persuade the considerate and judicious. Whatever the Doctor may think of our church, it hath ever been highly honoured by foreign protestants. The Lutherans prefer it to the Calvinist communion, the Calvinists to the Lutheran, the Greeks to both: which may sufficiently justify the expression, understood in a latitude not uncommon, that all other persuasions esteem it next to their own‡. And further, most, if not all of them, blame the English Dissenters for separating from it. The Doctor seems to entertain the worse opinion of it, because the members of the Church of Rome likewise esteem it more than they do others§. But we have to reply, that they hate it more also, as the most dangerous enemy to their cause, and strongest bulwark of the Reformation. If there be some appointments in it, which the scripture doth not require; so have their been from the first in the Church of New England too, as may be seen in the appendix to the history of that country, written by Mr Neale, a dissenting minister: and so there are in all the churches of the world. Ours hath not many things of this kind, nor lays great stress upon them: and to think indifferent things unlawful, is as unreasonable and superstitious, as to think them necessary.

He speaks with horror of its *enormous hierarchy, ascending by various gradations from the dirt to the skies*||: and *resembling that of the Romish Church, in which one great Prelate presides over the whole*¶. What he means by the former words, besides indeterminate abuse, perhaps he could not easily explain. That there are different ranks of men in civil

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govern-

* Page 128. † Page 126. ‡ Ibid. § Page 127. || Page 128 ¶ Page 67.

government, was never held to be an objection against it: and where is the harm of it in ecclesiastical? In the Presbyterian hierarchy, one is raised considerably above another, though the preference usually may be temporary: and their acts of power have been as enormous, as those of the English bishops formerly; and are much greater than those of the English bishops now. In his favourite comparison of our church to the Romish, the Doctor quite mistakes the matter. Not one, but two Prelates, preside over the Church of England; and four over her sister church of Ireland; which grievously spoils the similitude, that he would make out. And all these *preside in subordination to the king*, as he well knows; though he disingenuously hints a doubt of it by his ironical words, *I hope**; at the same time that, I believe, he would deny it to be in subordination to the king, that he presides over *the West Church in Boston*. As to *the dirt*, which he mentions: If some clergymen of our church are very low in the world, so are some of every church; nor do they deserve scorn for it, but compassion. And that any of ours are so high, as to do harm, or cause fear, by their elevation, the persons, amongst whom they live, find not: and he, who is placed so remote from them, had better judge by the experience of others, than by his own heated imagination.

Bishops, in his language, are *the mitred lordly successors of the fishermen of Galilee*†. Now if mitres offend him, our bishops wear none. If they are stiled lords, it is because, by the ancient constitution of our country, they sit in the upper house of parliament: where, I believe, they are thought as useful members as the rest. And I know not, whether the Doctor's modesty would propose that our constitution should be altered in this respect, or whether a much wiser man could foresee the consequences of such an alteration. Men may be lords, without being lordly: and they, who have professed to abhor the name, have carried the disposition of domineering to the height; and lorded it over the consciences and the liberties of others, as much as any who have worn higher titles. What intimation lies concealed under the terms, *Fishermen of Galilee*; and whether, in the Doctor's opinion, all ministers of Christ are to follow some trade, he hath not explained, nor

told

* Page 64.

† Page 128.

told us what his own is. But certainly reviling his brethren is a very bad one.

He also charges the Church of England with persecution; and particularly with driving out the ancestors of the present inhabitants of New England into that country*. Now it is a matter of notoriety, that the lawfulness of persecution is no doctrine of our church: and there are few of its members, if any, now, who approve it, or do not detest it. But we must acknowledge, that, when the errors of the Church of Rome were cast off, this was not immediately perceived to be one by almost any of the Protestant communions. The Church of England was but like others; and the Dissenters from it had not the least degree more of a tolerating spirit, perhaps not so much. There were amongst them peaceable men, and so there were amongst us. But in general their avowed aim was, not exemption for themselves, but the destruction of the ecclesiastical establishment†. On this they were treated too severely, and they returned the treatment to the full, as soon as they were able, in the total overthrow of church and state. Far from exaggerating, I chuse not to mention the particulars of their behaviour. Every good man must lament the faults of both sides; but to inveigh against one with bitterness, and leave it to be imagined that the other was innocent, which the Doctor doth, I hope he will see on recollection is extremely unjust.

In the *platform of discipline, agreed upon in the Synod of Cambridge*, in New England in 1648, and published by Mr Neale, in his history of that country, it is declared, that *heresy is to be restrained and punished by the civil magistrate; and that if any churches grow schismatical, or walk contrary to the rule of the word, he is to put forth his coercive power, as the matter shall require*‡. Accordingly, Mr Neale himself very honestly confesses, that the Churches of New England, *were formerly very uncharitable to those who differed from them, and had no notions of liberty of conscience, but were for forcing men to their public assemblies by fines and imprisonments*§. On their putting to death several Quakers, as they did before and after

* Page-129.

† See this fully proved in Maddox's vindication of the Church of England.

‡ Vol. 2. p 306.

§ Vol. 2. 248, 249.

ter the Restoration, till an order from King Charles the Second prohibited them *, he hath these words; *Now it appeared, that the New England Puritans were no better friends to liberty of conscience, than their adversaries; and that the question between them was not, whether one party of Christians should oppress another, but who should have that power †.* Nay, the Quakers affirm, that *they who had loudly cried out of the tyranny and oppression of the Bishops in Old England, from whom they fled, when settled in a place, where they had liberty to govern, made their little finger of cruelty bigger, than ever they found the loins of the Bishops ‡.* Dr Mayhew indeed saith, that *severities were used against the Quakers, much less under the notion of their being dissenters from the public mode of worship, than of their being disturbers of the peace and religious assemblies §.* But still severities were used against them on the former account; and they justly observe in Mr Neale, that offences of the latter kind *have never been thought worthy of death by any civilized nation ||.* But the Doctor asks, supposing the New Englanders to have persecuted the Quakers, *From whom did they learn this practice? Episcopalians certainly should lay their hands upon their mouths ¶.* Now the plain truth is, that all Protestants learnt this practice from the Church of Rome, and all should lay their hands upon their mouths. But the Doctor hath no right to open his as wide as he pleases, and require us to shut ours.

God be thanked, the members of our church are grown wiser and milder; the Dissenters in general, I am fully persuaded, are so too; and it is high time, that such of both parties, as are not, should. But performances, like the Doctor's, cannot surely contribute to this good end amongst either. He assures us indeed at the beginning, that he hath a *regard to truth and justice, with an aversion to controversy **; and at the end, that *he honours candid and moderate men of all denominations, and would not unnecessarily give offence to any person of the Episcopal persuasion †.* One must suppose, that he believes himself; and, as far as is possible, I would believe him also.

Some

* Vol. i. page 334.

† Vol. i. page 329.

‡ Grove's preface to Bishop's New England judged.

§ Page 79

|| Vol. i, p. 331, 332,

¶ Page 80,

* Page 7,

† Page 145,

Some persons are strangely subject to sudden gusts of passion, and say and do things in them, for which they are heartily sorry the next hour. But were this the Doctor's case in writing, he would blot out the injurious expressions which had dropt from his pen. Therefore his malady hath a deeper root in his frame, and influences him more constantly, though it may be without his perceiving it. For I am exceedingly unwilling to think, that he inserts his qualifying and healing clauses with an artful design to procure himself a dispensation for his outrages. However that be, his professions, that he doth not intend to do what he hath been doing just before, and doth again soon after with all his might, are protestations against fact, which cannot be admitted.

But whatever concessions a gentleman of this turn makes to his adversaries, are to be received with great regard, for one may be sure they are not too large. Let us therefore begin with these, in considering his remarks on the charter and conduct of the society.

He owns, that *it hath a right to plant churches, to support missions and schools, &c. in many of the British American Colonies*; and adds, that *no one, who hath ever read the charter, can possibly imagine, that its care and charity ought to be confined to the heathen slaves in, or the savages bordering on, the plantations* *. Yet many have been led both to imagine and to assert this, merely from its name. It is hoped, that for the future they will confess and remember their mistake. He owns likewise, that in three districts of New England, i. e. New Hampshire, Rhode-Island, and Providence, *much less care hath been taken for the support of a public worship, than in the rest* †: and that *a few missions from the society might be needed in these, particularly in Rhode-Island* ‡. And he blames them as unnecessary, only in *the Massachusetts and Connecticut*. Nay, he declares, that in these *it is by no means his intention to charge that venerable body with any wilful known misconduct, or improper application of monies, even though any incautious expression should at first view have the appearance of such an accusation* §. Again he saith, *I would by no means be understood, as charging so respectable a body with any wilful criminal abuse of*
power:

* Page 12, 13

† Page 36

‡ Page 46

§ Page 7

power*: Accordingly, after declaring his design to show, that they have in some respects counteracted the ends of their institution, he adds, however contrary to their intention†. He hath also these express words: *That the society have chiefly sent their missionaries into those British plantations, where they were much needed, according to the true design of their institution; and that they have hereby served the interest of religion in them, is by no means denied: it were very criminal to deny them the praise, that is justly due to them in this respect.* I honour the Doctor for these instances of candor; and if he had preserved the same temper throughout, should either have had no controversy with him, or have engaged in the friendly debate with pleasure; whereas now the frequent and copious effusions of a bad spirit in his work make such animadversions upon him unavoidable, as I should otherwise gladly have spared.

His charge on the society is, that they have maintained *Episcopal Churches, where other Protestant Churches were before settled, and the administration of God's word and ordinances provided for ‡, with a formal design, which they have long had, to root out Presbyterianism, &c. in the Colonies.* Now this design, in pursuance of which, he saith, they have in a great measure neglected the ends of their institution§, is falsely ascribed to them. They have never formed a scheme to root out presbyterianism, &c. in the Colonies, either by force, which the Doctor could not mean, though the word most naturally suggests it, or even by argument and persuasion. Undoubtedly they would be very glad, if all the inhabitants were of the communion of the church of England: as undoubtedly the Doctor would, if they were all of his communion. But they have sent no persons to effect this. He attempts to prove the contrary from the following instruction, given by them to their missionaries: *That they frequently visit their respective parishioners; those of our own communion, to keep them steady in the profession and practice of religion, as taught in the Church of England; those that oppose us, or dissent from us, to convince and reclaim them with a spirit of meekness and gentleness ||.* His words on that occasion are: *This clearly shows what they are after. It will also be observed here, that WE are considered as parishioners*

* Page 93. † Page 9. ‡ Page 15. § Page 86.

|| Collection of papers, printed by order of the society, page 24.

parishioners of the missionaries, no less than professed Episcopalians. And we are often spoken of as such by them in their letters to the Society, as appears by the abstracts. How assuming is this*! But surely it may be retorted, How unfair is this! The instruction plainly relates, not to missionaries settled in Presbyterian or congregational parishes, for there were none so settled when it was drawn up, but for incumbents of Episcopal parishes, though with a mixture of dissenters. And they would of course understand, that endeavouring to *convince and reclaim* the latter was not to be their stated and principal business, but occasional only and incidental. If the Doctor should happen to speak of the Episcopalians residing in his parish, as part of his parishioners, and say, that he should endeavour to *reclaim them with a spirit of meekness*; would this be a proof, that he was fixed there with a *formal design to root out Episcopacy* in it? If there be instances, in which missionaries, who have no legal parishes, have used the same language; (for he quotes none, and I remember none) it only follows that they have expressed themselves improperly, and should be set right when it is observed.

Another evidence produced by the Doctor is, that *in the account of the society, published in 1760, after speaking of the independent congregations in New England, they say: "Several other ways of division and separation did so much obtain in other of our colonies and plantations, that this made it more necessary to think of providing for a regular and orthodox ministry,—to promote, as much as possible, an agreement in faith and worship."* This, he saith, *can mean nothing, more or less, than uniformity, or a general conformity to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church of England*†. I have not been able to procure this account, or to learn by whom, or whose order, it was compiled. But the passage quoted from it, expressly speaks, not of independent, or any congregations in New England, but of *other ways of division and separation in other Colonies*, and therefore is nothing to the Doctor's purpose: besides that, *as much agreement as possible, in faith and worship* might be far less than a *general conformity to the Church of England*; which it might be impossible to obtain, and yet as near an approach to it as could be obtained,

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might,

* Page 89.

† page 86, 87.

might, even in his opinion, be more desirable, than letting them continue in their present way. For how bad that was, appears not.

The real conduct of the Society, with respect to provinces and parishes not Episcopal, hath been, to contribute towards supporting public worship and instruction amongst such members of the Church of England, as cannot in conscience comply with the worship and instruction of the other congregations in their neighbourhood, and yet cannot wholly maintain ministers for themselves. The most of these will usually be in the more considerable towns; and for that reason it is, and not with a view of making converts, as the Doctor pretends*, that episcopal ministers are settled in so many considerable towns of New England. But they are settled no where, till a competent number of our people, inhabiting near, request it, and subscribe what they are able. Nay, these requests have often, both formerly † and lately, been rejected, or postponed or many years together, when the number did not appear to be sufficient, or the Society apprehended, that too much of their money was going this way. And were it but known, as it seems to be in some measure to the Dissenters themselves ‡, how continual and importunate the calls and exhortations of such persons are, the impartial would wonder, how the Society could withstand so many of them as it hath done. These are plain evidences, that missionaries are not sent to New England for the purpose of making proselytes to Episcopacy. Accordingly, which is a further evidence, they have no directions, public or private, given them to make any, or to preach at all upon disputable points: but on the contrary, one rule laid down for them is, *that they keep always in view the great design of their undertaking; viz. to promote the glory of God, and the salvation of men, by propagating the gospel of our Lord and Saviour§*; and another is, *that the chief subject of their sermons be the great fundamental principles of Christianity; and the duties of a sober, righteous and godly life, as resulting from those principles ||*.

Nor

* Page 46. † See Humphrey's historical account, p. 61, &c.

‡ See Mr Hobart's serious address, page 133, 138.

§ Collection of papers, page 20.

|| Ibid page 23.

Nor can the missionaries easily misapprehend the intentions of the Society, thus manifested. Several of them have indeed spoken highly, sometimes perhaps, as it is but natural, too highly, of the increase of their churches; and have mentioned it with great pleasure in their letters, and no wonder. But they have not ascribed that increase to the pains which they have taken to bring persons over to it, but rather to the satisfaction which our service had given to persons, who of their own accord, from curiosity or other motives, attended it. Or if they now and then do mention themselves as making converts, they do not ever, to the best of my remembrance, mention this as the end for which they were appointed. Dr Johnson, one of the oldest of them, professes it not to be so, in these words: 'He [Mr Hobart] is much mistaken in saying—we 'make it our chief and grand business to proselyte Dissenters 'to the Church of England.—Our chief business is, to minister to those who are church people; and if this proves the 'occasion of increasing the number, it is but what may naturally be expected, when they, by that means, have opportunity to see how great the advantage is on our side*.' And Mr Beach, one almost, if not quite, as old, saith, 'It is not the 'design of the charter, that the Society should send missionaries to convert *presbyterians* to the church: and—it is a base 'reflection to say they do.—They never send missionaries to 'convert Protestants to the Church of England, but to minister to church people: and if Dissenters by that means are 'added to the church, they do not think by this any evil is 'done: This is the truth, and all the truth †.' Accordingly a very respectable missionary uses the following words, in a paper not printed, which I have seen: 'I believe very few 'instances, if any, can be produced of any missionary's beginning with any dissenter, with a view of reclaiming him to 'the church. I have long known the affairs of the Society, 'and know of no such instance.'

Therefore Mr Apthorp might well *aver*, as the Doctor tells us he is said to have done, *that he desires not to make one proselyte from the congregational church* †. The Doctor however thinks, that *there seems to be some difficulty in reconciling this*

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declaration

* Preface to Mr Beach's vindication, or address, 1749, p. 5, 6.

† Second Vindication, or address, 1751, p. 67. ‡ Ib. p. 63.

declaration with the hopes expressed in his letter to the Society, of future accessions to his congregation. But may there not be accessions to it by the settlement of more members of the Church of England in those parts, or by a change of sentiments in persons of other persuasions, without Mr Apthorp's interfering? The Doctor, unable or unwilling to perceive so obvious a solution, charitably helps him to come off, by supposing, that *perhaps it was from the college, not from the church, that he flattered himself with such accessions*: adding, *in which he is supposed to have been not a little disappointed.* But hath Mr Apthorp attempted to make any proselytes, either from the church or the college? If not, why is a poor needless evasion ascribed to him; and a disappointment supposed of hopes, which he doth not appear to have entertained? Why should not his declaration, and suitable behaviour, be rather deemed another proof, that the missionaries understand their business to be, not proselyting Dissenters, but officiating to our own people? The Doctor believes indeed, what may seem a presumption of the contrary, *that scarce ten families in the town of Cambridge usually attend the service of the church lately set up there* *. But it was represented to the Society, that fifty families in the town and neighbourhood were desirous to attend it. And, should they prove to be much fewer, yet several members of the church of England send their children to Harvard college there: and such a place of worship, as they and their parents approve, may be reasonably provided for them, without any design of proselyting others. There is indeed a college in New England, where students have been forbidden to attend episcopal service, and a young man hath been fined for going to hear his own father, an episcopal minister, preach. But in Harvard college, it seems, a better spirit prevails: and it is more likely to flourish, both for that moderation, and for the new church built near it.

The Doctor saith, that in some other places *the supplicants for missionaries have not exceeded eight or ten, or twelve heads of families* †. But if this be true, they have petitioned in the name of others, as well as their own. And supposing the society to have been misinformed about their numbers, this may happen notwithstanding good care; and by no means proves them

* Page 48.

† Ibid.

them to have a design, which other circumstances prove they have not.

But the Doctor apprehends, that whatever the number of these petitioners any where may be, conscience is but seldom their motive, and therefore they should not be encouraged. Indeed, he scarcely seems to conceive how it can be their motive; and wants to be told, *what there is that should give offence to good protestants* * in the presbyterian or congregational churches. We must not call them independent, for he saith, *the Episcopalians affect to reproach them under that name* †: tho' Mr Neale, himself an Independent, uses it frequently, and it is more proper, and not reproachful at all. Nor must we call them assemblies or communions; for he hath rebuked Mr Apthorp and the Archbishop of Canterbury for doing it ‡, though he doth it himself. In these churches therefore, he wants to know what there is that can give offence: and so lets himself again into his darling topic, of abusing the Church of England in comparison. However, he recollects that he hath heard some episcopalians say, and been told that others have said, *that they should much prefer the communion of the church of Rome* § to that of the Dissenters. And indeed none are so likely as he, and such as he, to provoke those into saying it, who would think very differently in their cooler hours. But supposing this to be their settled judgment; would he have them left to turn papists, if they will, because they are not so good protestants as they should be? The church of Rome and its society *de propaganda*, would have ground to thank him for establishing this notion. But if some of his own communion should say that they had rather be Anabaptists or Quakers, than Churchmen, would that be a reason why they should have no minister of his communion amongst them? I should imagine just the contrary. Persons of different parties in religion may think too ill of each other, without wishing ill to each other at all; and so may mean very well, though they judge greatly amiss. Or even if they mean ill, they have so much the more need of such instructors as they esteem to set them right.

But the Doctor, *to do the episcopalians justice, doth not suppose*

* Page 66.

† page 36.

‡ page 67.

§ Ibid.

pose that these sentiments generally prevail amongst them. And he admits, that some of them may possibly, without going these lengths, have conscientious scruples about the means of religion in his communion*. But he puts the word *possibly* in italicks: which intimates, that he thinks it barely possible. And this possibility he extends no further, in what follows, than to allow that there may be *some things or circumstances which they cannot intirely acquiesce in, or approve of*. Now would he account us to be sufficiently charitable, if we conceded only such a possibility of conscientiousness to the Dissenters from the Church of England? If not, why is he so extremely sparing in his concessions to us? We hold it to be probable, we hold it to be evident, that many Dissenters who are far from thinking us worse than papists, yet cannot in conscience use the means of religion in our communion. And surely we are intitled to as favourable an opinion from them. Without maintaining that *they have no gospel ministers, or sacraments, or ordinances, or churches* †, we may apprehend, whether rightly or wrongly is not to be disputed now, but sincerely however, that Episcopacy is of Apostolical institution, and that scripture affords as good proof of this, as of the appointment of infant baptism and the Lord's day. We may apprehend that, after the ceasing of extraordinary spiritual gifts, forms of prayer were always used, more or less, throughout the Church of Christ, and are needful for the observance of the scripture rule, *Let all things be done decently and in order* ‡. Without judging those who reject both these, (*for to their own Master they stand or fall* §) we may judge it unlawful for us to join in the rejection of either. Nay, were we only to think their ministry, compared with that of our church, to be unedifying, and make that our plea for preserving a separation from them, we should but follow the pattern which many of the English Dissenters have set.

The Doctor indeed assigns very different motives, for the non-compliance of our people: 'Levity, petulance, avarice, groundless disgust at the stated minister, dissatisfaction about pews and rates, or at being under, or likely to come under censure for immoral practices. But he doth not affirm positively that either [he means any] of these hath always been the

* page 68.

† page 63.

‡ 1 Cor. xiv. 10.

§ Rom. xiv. 4.

'the case without exception *.' Here again he is remarkably careful, that his concessions to the poor Episcopalians shall not be too liberal. And to keep on even terms with him, we do not affirm positively that none of these hath ever been the case. But we must insist, that the favourable presumption is the preferable one, and that men's professions, concerning their own inducements, are to be credited, unless the contrary appears; which, according to the best intelligence that could be got, we believe it hath not ordinarily done, in the matter now under consideration. On one of these heads, *avarice*, the Doctor explains himself, by saying, that *till a law was made, obliging the episcopalians to pay ministerial rates in common with others, but for the support of their own clergy, episcopacy made a great progress; and that if they had been exempted from all ministerial taxes as the Quakers are; almost all who loved their money better than any thing else, might in the course of a few years have adorned the communion of the church †.* But what needed they who loved their money better than any thing else, turn episcopalians to save it, when turning Quakers would have served the same purpose more effectually? And have any Episcopalians turned Quakers, when they found their former change would secure them no longer? If not, this suggestion is unauthorized and unwarrantable. He declines giving any recent instances of mens acting upon the motives which he alledges, because if you will believe him to be so tender, old ones, given by another person, may be less invidious. Of these he produces two, from a letter of Dr Colman of Boston, written above 50 years ago to Dean, afterwards Bishop Kennet. And he observes rightly, that the Dean, in his answer, expresses his belief that they are true. But he plainly believed it only on the information of Dr Colman, a perfect stranger to him; nor can any inquiry into the real truth be made now. And I beg leave to observe in my turn, that according to Dr Mayhew's own account, for I have no other, the Dean thought the Society was authorized to *plant episcopal churches, where, though there was a settled ministry, there were also good numbers, who could not in conscience conform to the ways of worship different from the established Church of England ‡.* Therefore asserting, that the true and only design of
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* page 47.

† page 49.

‡ page 50,—55.

the Society, in sending missionaries to the Massachusetts and Connecticut, hath always been to provide for such persons, is not a new plea, set up to serve a turn. The Dean had good opportunities of knowing its real purposes; and so worthy a man as Dr Mayhew allows him to be, would not have written as he hath done, if he had suspected any further insidious scheme. Indeed the society, far from having formed a project to episcopize (as the Doctor calls it) that country, had but three missionaries in it seven years after; and the following ones went upon no other errand than the first.

After saying that the above-mentioned causes produced factions and parties, and they produced episcopal separations, the Doctor goes on to say, that *divers of the missionaries have been much injured, (which there is no reason to suppose) if they have not been very busy in fomenting these divisions; yea, been at the bottom of them* *. But I take the liberty of maintaining, that there is great reason to suppose they have been injured. For in all such disputes it never fails, but each side injures the other; and the Missionaries would be very sure of having a double load of calumny thrown upon them. Still, that some of them may have been to blame in this respect, is not only possible, but, considering human nature, too likely. And if any where it can be proved that they have been *busy bodies in other men's matters* †, or used bad arts to promote a good cause, they ought to be reprimanded, and if they amend not, removed. But the Doctor, conscious that misbehaviours of particular persons would not come up to his point, charges the Society itself with *manifesting a sufficient forwardness to encourage and increase small disaffected parties in towns, upon an application to them*. And this, he saith, *appears* ‡. But how it appears, he hath not said, nor can I imagine. The Society hath never been made acquainted with any of the little quarrels in the towns of New England; and were they to know them, they are too remote to give directions about them; unless the Doctor can make it *appear*, that they have given their missionaries a general direction to inflame them all, as much as they can.

Perhaps he may think that no other causes can be alledged, than such as he hath produced, for the increase of episcopallians

lians in those parts. But this would be a great mistake. Though the first planters of New England were separatists from our church, many conformists to it came afterwards to settle there; and some of them, as I am credibly informed, were to be found fifty years ago, in almost every town of considerable standing. These new comers were despised and reproached for their religious principles by their neighbours; most of whom had been taught to think the Church of England nearly as bad as the Church of Rome. Thus attacked, it was natural that they should endeavour to defend themselves, and procure such books as would enable them to do it better. Some of the more candid and inquisitive amongst the presbyterians and congregationalists adventured to hear their denunciations, and to read their authors; were convinced by them, and became churchmen. As their number grew, it was natural that they should endeavour to procure themselves ministers, and on their request the Society helped them. This occasioned a further augmentation, to which also contributed greatly the wild enthusiasm that prevailed in several of the New England churches, even before Mr Whitefield came amongst them, but was mightily increased by him and the strolling teachers that followed him; as did likewise their extending spiritual censures to mere trifles, with their endless contentions and confusions on the settling of ministers, and on various occurrences besides; all which things disgusted and wearied out many of their people, and induced them to seek a peaceable refuge in our communion. If these are known facts, as I am assured they are, they will go a very great way towards accounting for the growth of the episcopal party; and the Doctor should not have suppressed them, and ascribed it wholly to such bad and such low motives as he hath done, in order to throw an odium upon the Society, as encouraging what it abhors, for the attainment of a design which it never framed.

But the Doctor seems to intimate, that *even upon supposition* that the episcopalians in New England, who pleaded that they had no ministers whom they could attend, were *conscientious people*, yet they were not *much to be pitied*, or *really objects of charity**. Surely he could not mean this. At least, I should have great compassion for a number of Dissenters in the same

state. Thus much however he allows, that *if any persons in England, in their private capacity, should think it*, which again rather implies, that he in their condition should not think it, *a deed of charity to support Episcopal Churches in New England, for the sake of those comparatively few conscientious people, to whom the means of religion, to be had in Protestant Dissenting communions, are no means — they have a right to do it.* But he insists that the Society hath not, *their whole fund and revenue being otherwise appropriated*; which he undertakes to prove from their charter.

Now, I acknowledge that the case of the New England Episcopalians, is not particularly described and provided for in the charter. But so neither is the case of any other Indians, than such as are the King's *subjects, and people living in his plantations and colonies*, for to these only the letter of the charter extends; and in respect of others, Mr Apthorp might justly say, that *Indian conversions are undertaken by the Society, as it were ex abundanti.* Yet Dr Mayhew is so far from blaming the Society for applying part of their benefactions to the instruction of such Indians as only border on his Majesty's dominions, that he blames them greatly for not applying more of it to that use. Now, if their case, which existed when the charter was granted, and yet is not named in it, may however be looked on as comprehended within its intention, and obtain relief by means of it, in consequence of the general principle on which it is founded, much more may that of the episcopalians, which did not exist, and was not foreseen, and therefore no wonder it was not named. Though it was not expressly mentioned before it was in being, still if, when it came into being, it was included under the reason and equity of the purposes which are expressly mentioned; paying regard to it must be understood to be allowed by the charter, and virtually directed in it. For the rules of law require that grants of Princes, and particularly grants in favour of religion, be interpreted as liberally as may be*. And thus far, I conceive, Mr Apthorp rightly asserts, that *the Society have a discretionary power of making alterations in their institution*; nor do I believe that he meant to carry it further, however unmercifully

* See those rules in Wood's Institutes of civil law, introd. c. 13. sect. 3.

ully Dr Mayhew hath treated him * on the supposition that he did.

If it be doubted, notwithstanding the above-mentioned argument *à fortiori*, whether the case of the New England episcopalians comes within the charter or not, I beg the reader's attention to the following additional considerations. The King sets forth in it, as a principal reason of granting it, that *for lack of support for ministers, many of his loving subjects want the administration of God's word and sacraments*. Now must not they who lack support for such ministers, as they can with a good conscience attend, want the administration of God's word and sacraments? Would not the generality of the Presbyterians and Congregationalists in New England think they wanted it, if there were no other than Episcopal churches there? And why may not Episcopalians think in a like manner? And can one imagine, that when the King's subjects abroad, conformists to the church established in England by law, were, without their own fault, and merely through their situation and their poverty, unprovided of such public means of religion as their inward persuasion required, it could be agreeable to his Royal Will that they should be excluded from the benefit of this charter? But further, the King recites, that part of his people, through the fore-mentioned unhappy circumstances, *seem to be abandoned to atheism and infidelity*, and others are in danger of being *perverted to popish superstition and idolatry*; and both these things he was desirous to prevent. Now, doth not the Doctor think the Episcopalians, when they have no ministers in whose ministrations they can acquiesce, must be grievously liable to the one or the other? Particularly, must not those of them be in great danger of popery who, as he tells us, prefer that to the worship of the prevailing party in New England? And must it not be presumed that the charter would have guarded explicitly against these evils, had they been foreseen? But further still, the King declares, that *he thinks it his duty, as much as in him lies, to promote the glory of God by the instruction of his people in the Christian religion*. Now, will not this be more fully effected if the Episcopalians in New England are instructed, than if they are not instructed? And lastly, the King proposes, that *for accomplishing the ends intended*

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by the charter, *a sufficient maintenance be provided for an orthodox clergy to live amongst his subjects in these parts*. I do not lay the greatest stress on this last clause, because it specifies only what sort of clergy should be sent, not to whom they should minister. And yet, if the intention was, that only clergymen of the Church of England should be employed, (and public authority, I believe, hath never directed others to be employed) it must surely be intended likewise, that all the laity of the Church of England, who could be benefited by them, should.

Here indeed the Doctor objects, that *orthodoxy, in its most common use, hath no reference to ecclesiastical polity**. But supposing that, why may not the charter use it in its original and not uncommon signification, of right notions in religious matters, whether they relate to faith or morals, or worship, or church government? The head of an Episcopal Church cannot be deemed indifferent about any of these; especially in forming a corporation, into which, I believe, no one Dissenter was by the charter admitted. But he objects again, that King William, *though as Head of the Church of England, there was a necessity of his externally conforming to its rules and discipline, cannot be supposed by orthodox ministers to have intended those of the Church of England, in distinction from others*†. Thus he is pleased to represent, for the sake of his hypothesis, our glorious deliverer as a mere *external*, and consequently hypocritical conformist: though it is well known, that on his death-bed he was attended by ministers of our church and no other, and received the sacrament from a Bishop's hands. Nor, I presume, is the Doctor ignorant, that he settled 100*l.* a year on an Episcopal Church at Boston‡; which clearly shows, that he thought Episcopal Churches proper objects of royal bounty, even in places where there was a settled ministry of another sort before. And his successors, to this day, have thought in the same manner. But had he been ever so rigid a non-conformist, every word of his charter must have been interpreted, not by his private opinion, but by the spirit of the laws and the constitution.

The Doctor pleads also, that *divers of the New England laws, relative to ministers, in which they are designed as orthodox, have*

* Page 60.

† Page 20.

‡ Humphry's account, p. 7, 313.

have had the allowance of the King *. And had the intent of these laws been to enact, that they were orthodox, the plea would have been of some weight. But where the King only assents to a bill, framed for another purpose, in which this word, used by them concerning themselves, is to be found, his connivance at their use of it, against which it might have been hurtful to object, can never show, in what sense he uses it of his own accord in an English charter. He saith likewise from Mr Hobart, that *if we think none but the clergy of the Church of England are in a legal sense orthodox ministers, we may be informed how that matter was determined by the King in Council, in the cause between Mr Macsparran and Mr Torrey* †. But the council did not declare the Dissenting ministers to be orthodox in the legal sense, but in the sense of the donors of the land in dispute. And this answer Mr Beach gave long ago to Mr Hobart ‡. But the Doctor hath chosen to repeat the objection, without taking notice of the answer.

He urges also, that *if we deny the New England ministers the title of orthodox, we must deny it to the ministers of all other churches, except perhaps that of Rome* §, and engross the whole of that precious commodity, as he scornfully calls it, *to our own party* ||. Now he knows in his heart, that we think the Church of Rome far more heterodox than we do any of the Protestant Churches, yet he could not resist the temptation of insinuating the contrary. I hope his conscience will do him the kind office of putting him to the blush in private, for this and many like instances of dissimulation. As to other churches, so far as their opinions differ from ours, be it in points more or less material, we do indeed think them mistaken, or, if the Doctor pleases, heterodox; but without the least contempt of them, or breach of brotherly love towards them; and we allow them to think us so, without taking it amiss. But he hath thought fit to acquaint us, that heterodoxy and heresy are the same thing ¶. So that whoever dissents from Dr Mayhew in any point relative to Christian faith, it seems, is accounted by him an heretic. His New England brethren, if indeed they acknowledge him for a brother, are desired to consider the consequences

* Page 61. † Page 62, 63. ‡ Second vindication or address, 69.

§ Page 61.

|| Page 59.

¶ Page 20, 58, 61.

consequences of this way of thinking. *We have not so learned Christ**

But the Doctor hath not yet done with orthodoxy. *That precious commodity*, he fancies will afford him still further advantages. And therefore he tells us, it is known, or at least generally supposed amongst them, that their New England ministers adhere much more closely both to the letter and the spirit of the doctrinal articles of our church, than most of the Episcopal clergy themselves†. Thus imaginary notorieties and vague suppositions, answer equally the Doctor's end of blackening the Episcopalians in the esteem of his neighbours, by imputing to them deviations from the established faith, for which, if they were real, he would, *unless* (to use his own words) *he is much injured*, like them the better. We can only deny the charge, and put him on the proof, which we do. And he would seem to attempt a proof in respect of Mr Apthorp, setting some passages in a sermon of his, and some of the 39 articles, in a pretended opposition‡: though it is visible at first sight, that Mr Apthorp speaks only against the doctrine of unconditional reprobation, and the extravagancies of the Antinomians, and that the articles quoted assert neither of them. But this accusation served a double purpose; of intimating first, that Mr Apthorp subscribed the articles insincerely, and then affecting to bring him off by a subterfuge, of which he hath no need, that *possibly he hath altered his opinion since*.

I have dwelt too long, in complaisance to the Doctor, on the term *orthodox*. Now I proceed with his proofs of the Society's misconduct. He alleges that Dr Bray took great pains to inform himself of the state of religion in the colonies; and delivered it, as the result of his inquiries, that he found no need at all of missionaries in Connecticut and the Massachusetts§. This again he quotes from Mr Hobart; and again omits to take notice of the full answer which Mr Beach had given to it fourteen years ago, in these words: "I grant there was a time, when, as Dr
" Bray saith, there was little or no occasion of sending mis-
" sionaries to the Massachusetts or Connecticut, because there
" were then few or no church people who wanted a minister.
" Yet now the case is very much alter'd; and as there are
" some

* Eph. iv. 20.

† Page 60

‡ Page 76, 77.

§ Page 41, 42.

"some thousands, so they are like to increase*." Had the design of the Society, in sending missionaries to those two governments, been to make profelytes, they would have thought there was most need, instead of no need, to send, when there were fewest church people in them. But they sent none for eight or nine years, as Dr Mayhew himself observes†: and they have sent them afterwards, just as the necessities of the people required; not to propagate the peculiarities of the Church of England, as he pretends‡, but to preserve a due sense of Christianity, and perform religious offices amongst its members.

The Doctor alledges also, that *in some churches, which, according to the abstracts, have been represented as growing, flourishing, and increasing in reputation, for near half a century, the number of stated worshippers at this day, very little, if any thing, exceeds ten or twelve families*§. Yet he tells us himself, that in 1718, which is not half a century ago, there were but *three missions in all New England*||: and every one of these far exceeds that number of families; as do the latter also, if we may believe accounts, as credible as the Doctor's, who, though he denies those of the missionaries to be true, confesses, that *the direct proof of a negative, in such cases, is no easy matter*¶. The Society wish, and endeavour to be well informed, concerning the number of families in every mission. If they are misinformed only in some few instances, it is neither a great marvel nor a great objection. And if they apprehend many missions to be more considerable than they are, since Episcopacy thrives so poorly, the Doctor hath no reason to be alarmed about it. For supposing them to have engaged in the enterprize which he imagines, they will certainly grow sick of it and abandon it. But indeed I doubt, whether any one of them ever dreamt of what he is pleased to say *both long been their formal design, the true plan and grand mystery of their operations in New England**.

Another thing asserted by him, is, that after Episcopal congregations *in some places have become well able to support their own ministers, the Society have still continued to pay these*: to which he adds, that *the only reason, why he doth not come to particu-*

* Second vindication or address, p. 67, 68. † p. 44. ‡ p. 43.

§ p. 48. || p. 44. ¶ p. 83. * p. 49.

particulars, is, lest it should seem too invidious; and that this conduct of the Society for some years, proved no inconsiderable means of increasing the church party.* Now, the Society hath always been desirous to know, when any congregation became able to support itself without their help; and have never continued their contribution, when they have understood that to be the case. If their friends have been too slow in giving them intelligence, which may have happened, and the Doctor will favour them with any, which on inquiry shall appear to be well grounded, they will both be thankful to him, and show the world that they are far from wishing to increase the church party by profuse liberalities.

The Doctor exaggerates the fault, with which he charges the Society, of misapplying their money, by alledging further, that they have done no good by it. He declares, that *he never knew an example of any profelyte from their churches to ours, being brought back to a Christian life: but that there are numerous ones of persons, whose morals, though exceptionable before, were much worse afterwards; that they often become loose, profligate, vain and censorious, seemingly placing no small part of their religion in railing at their congregational and presbyterian neighbours†.* Now, in answer to an accusation of the same nature, brought by Mr Hobart, Mr Beach hath *seriously declared, that he hath known many persons who have greatly improved in virtue by the change‡.* And other worthy missionaries have declared the same thing. The Doctor indeed will perhaps treat me for producing missionaries, as he hath Mr Apthorp for producing members of the Society, as *witnesses in what he calls their own cause§.* But the testimony of its accuser is not more admissible. The zealots of all parties, and those of his own at least, as much as others, are mighty apt to speak with over great severity of such as forsake them. And if the Doctor himself doth not place some part of his religion in railing at the Episcopalians, it is very hard to account for his practising it so much. But besides, the question is not, whether profelytes to the Church of England grow better, but whether the members of the Church of England would not grow worse, if they had no stated ministry to prevent it.

Inattentive

* Ibid. † page 32. ‡ First vindication or address, p. 43.

§ page 9, 70.

Inattentive to this, he urges further, that swearing, gaming, &c. are beyond all comparison more frequent, since the Church of England prevailed there, than before*. Yet Mr Beach saith, he is persuaded, that solid Christian virtue, as well as knowledge, increases, as the church gains ground in the country; and thousands of people are really bettered by it in their moral character†. But supposing the above-mentioned vices are more frequent since that time, so I fear these and others are in England since the Revolution and the toleration. But would it not be very wicked to ascribe the increase of them to either of these? Are the missionaries examples of vice? The Doctor hath not dared to say it. Do they preach in favour of vice? Are they not as diligent and zealous to the full in teaching moral duties, as the ministers of his communion, if not more so? And why then are the immoralities, of which he speaks, to be imputed to them, or the Society, or the Church of England, when perhaps his own friends are as much degenerated as any? He declares indeed, that he will not affirm that this is greatly the work of the Society. But he hath done his utmost to make others think it; and, I suppose, imagines that Episcopalians deserves no better treatment. In one thing however he hath dealt very fairly. After expressing his persuasion, that there is less religion in those parts of New England, where the Society's money hath been expended, than there would have been, had it been sunk in the ocean, he adds, 'tis not to be supposed that any Episcopalians can be of this opinion; neither is any stress laid upon it in the present argument †.

Mr Apthorp asserts, that, instead of harm, the New England missionaries have done great good there; that the religious state of the country is manifestly improved,—though much indeed remains to be done in manners and piety. And here the Doctor, with his usual charity, represents him as making a concession, that this boasted Reformation very little, if at all, consists in the improvement of piety and morals§. Then he proceeds, without any occasion given him, to a mock defence of the formal air, which he admits the old divines of that country had, compared with the jovial countenances which he ascribes to the missionaries||. What the Doctor's countenance

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* Page 75. † Second Vindication, or address, p. 65.

‡ page 96, 97. § page 73. || page 74.

is, I know not ; but I wish he gave as good proofs of a serious heart, as the missionaries in general do. That religion were a gloomy and uninviting appearance amongst the Puritans there formerly, and now wears a more pleasing one amongst their descendants, and that in part they have learnt this alteration for the better from the members of the Church of England, the Doctor, I presume, will not deny, though he will not permit an Episcopalian to say it; and Mr Apthorp did not mean to say more on this head.

What he saith in the next place, of the improvements lately made there in the speculative doctrines of religion, the Doctor endeavours to construe into the licentious insult on their *fathers* and teachers, *living and dead**; of which Mr Apthorp had evidently no intention, though he doth use a strong expression or two, which probably were not meant even of the dead teachers at large, but of the wild sectaries with which that country abounded†. At least they cannot be meant of the living fathers, because he both owns and pleads, that the faults which he blames are amended. And, after abusing him for some time, the Doctor himself allows, *it was too common a thing for people in New England to express themselves in a manner justly exceptionable upon these points*; and that they may be *indebted to the Society or their missionaries in some degree*, for their doing otherwise now‡. So that in the main he agrees with Mr Apthorp, at the same time that he inveighs against him; and probably wishes that far greater changes were made in the speculative doctrines of his brethren, than the Society and its missionaries would approve.

Mr Apthorp adds, that *hypocrisy hath worn off, in proportion as men have seen the beauty of holiness*: that is, in proportion as the face of religion hath become amiable, and its doctrines have been rationally explained; the two things which he had mentioned immediately before. But the Doctor chuses to misunderstand him of the beauty of *rites, and modes, and forms*, in order to get an opportunity of reproaching the Church of England again, as placing holiness *in a zeal for these*§, which it notoriously doth not. I wish others were as far from placing it in a zeal against them.

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* Page 75.

† See Humphrey's account, page 36, 37, 38.

‡ page 78.

§ page 79.

The last instance of religious improvement, in which Mr Apthorp thinks the missionaries have been instrumental, is, the *exterminating of persecution*. On this the Doctor observes, that *no acts of uniformity ever took place in New England* *. Very true, for they could not obtain them: else there was a time when they certainly would. But they made a shift to persecute pretty effectually without them. He adds, that no persecution *had been known amongst them for many years before the Society was in being* †. But can he prove that they held it unlawful before that time? He represents it as incredible, that *the posterity of those who had persecuted their fathers in America, should teach the present generation their charity and moderation* ? But why more incredible, than that the posterity of those who had persecuted the Quakers in America should now be enemies to persecution? The act of toleration was passed by members of the Church of England. Mr Locke, a member of the same church, was, of all English writers, the greatest advocate for toleration. The esteem of it increased continually. The generality of our missionaries, I hope, carried that esteem with them into New England. The need of toleration there must recommend it still more to their good opinion; the necessity of allowing it to them must gradually reconcile others to an approbation of that allowance; and better motives, I doubt not, co-operated with these: Which had the strongest influence, I do not undertake to determine. But surely the Doctor goes too far, when he saith, *Wherever we learnt Christian charity towards those who differ from us, we did not learn it of the Church of England*. Where else they learnt it, he doth not say; and they certainly might learn it from her, unless they disdained to learn any thing from her. Where he learnt it indeed will be very needless to enquire, till he gives better proofs of his having learnt it at all. For one who uses his pen in such a manner, seems but too likely, notwithstanding a few expressions of gentler import here and there, to use other weapons, if he had the command of them. Yet I do not suspect him of *hoping to shoot Episcopalians as freely as pigeons*; though he saith it is credibly reported, that *some of the warm Episcopalians hope for the time when they may*

* page 79.

† page 80.

treat *Dissenters* so*. Mr Beach, on the other hand, hath actually heard some of the Presbyterians say, it was pity that all those, who first set up the worship of God, according to the Church of England in that country, had not been hanged, as the Quakers were formerly at Boston†. Such hot-headed creatures, I am persuaded, say much more than they deliberately think; and are too few, on either side, to deserve the notice of the other. The New England Episcopalians in general, so far as I can learn, sincerely desire to live amicably with their neighbours. And amongst the English, with whom my acquaintance hath been pretty extensive, and without whom the others cannot be formidable, I know not a man of the clergy or laity, and do not believe there is one in a hundred, perhaps I might say a thousand, who wishes to overturn the present toleration of the Dissenters. I should be glad of an assurance, that they wish no worse to the church establishment. The Doctor saith, *they do not in all respects find the kindest usage from us, being subject to divers temporal inconveniences*‡. I suppose he hath principally in view the Test-Act. Now, without digressing to enquire whether this be justifiable or not, they who approve of restraining them so far, may heartily disapprove any further restraints; nay, many of them hath given the strongest evidence that they do. And perhaps as many Episcopalians in New England are excluded from offices without law, as Dissenters here by law, on account of their religion. But enough of this.

The Doctor argues moreover, that even supposing the missionaries in New England to have done good there, *though it may be some apology, it will not justify the Society, if it hath occasioned the neglect of a much greater good to the heathens, or unprovided colonies*§, who had an exclusive right to the money which had been sunk in the Episcopal gulph||. But the exclusive right hath been disproved, and there hath been no designed neglect. The heathens meant must be either the Indians or the negroes. Now the Doctor owns, that *as to the Indians, there have been, and still are, some great discouragements in attempting to christianize them*. But he saith, that *according to divers appearances, the Society have had this work less at heart* than

* Page 81.

† Vindication, or address, p. 28.

‡ page 80.

§ page 72.

|| page 92.

than that of propagating Episcopacy in New England*. I hope he would not have the complaint made by the Indian Sachem, in June 1700†, reckoned amongst these appearances, for the Society was not incorporated till a year after. But he saith, that *the accusation of neglecting the natives in America, bath been in some sort allowed to be just by the Society themselves*; and brings, for a proof of it, Bishop William's sermon before them in 1705‡. Now, unhappily for the Doctor, Bishop Williams doth not speak of the Society, in the words which he quotes, but of the English nation. Nor could he speak of the Society, as neglecting the Indians, and yet less as neglecting them to propagate Episcopacy in New England; for the Society had not subsisted five years, and had but one, if any, missionary in that whole province. But the Bishop's words founded so plausibly for a charge upon the Episcopalians, that he could not forbear misapplying them. He affirms, that *it would not be difficult to justify this complaint by an appeal to any of the later sermons before the Society*. I conceive it would, and he hath not attempted it. In one place he expresses a doubt, whether the Society have so much as *begun to use methods of converting either the Negroes or the Indians*. But in another he owns, that *they had made some essays from time to time towards the conversion of the savages; but very feeble and spring ones, compared with the zeal of the French to popize the Indians, or with their own zeal to Episcopize New England*§. Now indeed they have shewn no zeal to Episcopize New England; and it is much easier (I go on with the Doctor's language) to popize than to Christianize the Indians. Teaching them a few words and ceremonies, of which they know not the meaning; giving them a few trinkets, and inspiring them with a mortal hatred against the English, makes them good Christians enough to serve the purposes of the French; and no wonder that such conversions are effected with ease. Our Society cannot undertake to make profelytes in this manner. Besides, it hath not such numbers to employ, such funds to maintain them, or such authority to require their perseverance in the work. Many of their missionaries are under vows of absolute obedience, none of ours are; and therefore they will engage to go only where they chuse, and will stay no longer than they chuse.

* page 98. † p. 107. ‡ p. 98. § p. 134, 135.

chuse. Reasonable persons will be moderate in blaming them, if they consider the manifold disagreeableness and danger of such an employment; but at least they will be far from blaming the Society for not sending missionaries, when they cannot procure them. And that they have failed to use their best endeavours for procuring them, the Doctor doth not assert.

Instead of this, he first insinuates, without proof, what would be nothing to his purpose if true, that *the missionaries have frequently given the world too pompous accounts of their efforts, and spoken hyperbolically of their difficulties, and been too soon discouraged**; and then goes on to make remarks on Mr now Dr Barclay's mission, about twenty-five years ago, as if nothing worth notice had been attempted before. He is careful indeed to tell us, that an order of council was made very early [in 1702] for sending two Protestant ministers to the Indians of the five nations; that this order was communicated to the Society and referred to the committee†. But that any thing was done, or tried upon it, or about the same time with it, he hath not given the least hint. Yet he might have known, and probably did know, from Dr Humphrey's, to whom Mr Apthorp refers his readers, not only that the Society sent a missionary that very year, the first after it was formed, to endeavour the conversion of the Indians bordering on South Carolina, and that *the Governor and other gentlemen there, thinking it not to be a proper season*, disposed of him another way‡: but that, in pursuance of the above order, the Society, after inviting unsuccessfully a Dutch and an English minister, who lived in the neighbourhood of those nations, to undertake their conversion, prevailed on the Rev. Mr Thoroughgood Moor to go upon this design in 1704, who applied to the Mohocks, and acquainted them, *that another minister was daily expected for the Oneydes, and one for every other nation, as soon as proper and willing persons could be found*; that they seemed at first highly pleased with the care thus taken of them; but would give no determinate answers to his offers of instructing them, nor at last any answers at all, *though he used all the means he could think of to get their good-will*: so after a twelve months trial he left them, and was soon after lost at sea§. The Doctor might also have known,

* page 99. † p. 108. ‡ p. 108. § p. 286,—291.

known, if he did not, that Mr Barclay, a different person from the above-mentioned, being sent missionary to the same Indians in or before 1709, *tried all the methods he could to engage them to be instructed in our language and religion, but with very small success; that several indeed would seem for a time to be converted, but soon after would return again to their former savage life* *.

His passing over in silence the following account is still more observable. In 1710, the request of the four Sachems, who came over to England that their subjects might be instructed in Christianity by resident ministers, being thought to favour a new attempt, *the society agreed to send two missionaries to the Mohock and Oneydes Indians, with a salary of 150l. sterling each, together with an interpreter and schoolmaster to teach the young Indians.* Accordingly Mr Andrews was sent over as missionary, and an interpreter and schoolmaster were assigned him. He was presented to the Indians with great solemnity, and received by them with great marks of joy; but the parents obstinately refused to let their children learn English. Therefore both parents and children were instructed in the Indian tongue, as well as the nature of it would permit. But in a short time they grew weary of being taught. Their fathers would not suffer their boys to be corrected or displeased, in order to their learning any thing. As they grew up, they took them along with them, when they went out in bodies to hunt, for several months together, and they could not be brought to a settled life. They took and dismissed wives at their pleasure; were continually making expeditions, and practising cruelties one upon another; left their aged men and women to perish; got drunk whenever they could, and in their drunkenness were mad and mischievous to the highest degree. They who had learnt something, shewed in their lives no regard to it; and even the four Sachems became savages again. French Jesuits from Canada instilled into them jealousies by false assertions, which Popish missionaries never scruple; and some of the Juscararo Indians, driven from North Carolina, which they had perfidiously attacked, filled them with such groundless resentments by unjust representations of what had passed there, that they forbade Mr Andrews to visit them at their habitations,

bitations, would no longer come to the chapel or the school, nor suffer him to speak of religion to them when he met them occasionally, but insulted and threatened him and his companions, who were in danger of their lives whenever they ventured out of the Fort, where they dwelt. At length therefore he represented to the Society, that he despaired of any further success. Yet they would not hearken to his single narration and opinion, but requested Mr Hunter, Governor of New York, to make inquiry, whether continuing his mission was likely to be of use. And on the Governor's confirming the accounts which Mr Andrews had given, they recalled him, after a trial of six years*.

I beg the reader to compare these relations, taken from authentic papers, with the Doctor's unauthorized suggestions, that the missionaries told what stories they would, and the Society believed them without examination, or wilfully neglected this part of their business. Without entering into the subsequent particulars of this Indian undertaking, I shall only say in general, that other missionaries were sent afterwards, and with some effect, down to the year 1735, when the first-mentioned Mr Barclay went, of whose mission alone the Doctor is pleased to take notice, because he thinks it will afford matter of objection.

Accordingly he alledges, that Mr Barclay had not *half a proper support*, but the *mission was starved*. For Mr Serjeant, a missionary from the Society incorporated in 1661, reports from a letter of Mr Barclay, that *he had but a scanty allowance (i. e. from the Society) and could obtain no salary for an interpreter or schoolmaster*†. And Mr Barclay himself saith, in a letter, June 11. 1736, that *he laboured under great disadvantage for want of an interpreter, which could he but enjoy for two or three years, he should be master of the Indian language*‡. Now when Mr Barclay wrote these letters, of which I know nothing but from the Doctor, he was not a missionary, but a catechist only. And though he had, as he saith, but a scanty allowance, *i. e. 30l.* a year from the Society, yet he expected *further encouragement* from them, and the Assembly of New York had also voted him 30l. a year, which may account for the smallness of the Society's allowance. Only he had not received either of the salaries

* Page 295,—311.

† Page 101.

‡ Page 102.

salaries *. But, before the end of the same year, he wrote to the Society, that he had made himself master of the Mohock language, which probably induced them to think an interpreter unnecessary. The next year they raised his salary to 50*l*. Why he desired in 1740 an interpreter, as well as a schoolmaster, appears not; but in the same year a schoolmaster was allowed him. That the Society should be cautious and frugal in the first trial of a young man, after so many disappointments, is far from being strange. And the expence of an interpreter for two or three years, which is all that Mr Barclay wished, could not possibly be grudged, in order to save so trifling a sum towards a more favourite purpose, as the Doctor would have it believed. Nor did the mission miscarry for want of due support, as he leads his readers to imagine it did. What he quotes from Mr Apthorp, that *from the latest accounts we find this mission much dwindled, or greatly interrupted*, relates to the state of things brought on eighteen years afterwards by the late war. Mr Barclay's mission was carried on with seeming success till about the year 1745, by which time the French had infused such dreadful imaginations into our Indians, and incited their own to such violences, that it was no longer safe for Mr Barclay to stay amongst them. There is therefore not the least ground for the Doctor's pretence, that the Indians did not think the English in earnest, or that the French made their advantage of any negligence of the society. Instead of despising what the Society was doing, they were alarmed at it, and employed both all their usual arts and open force to defeat it. However, Mr Oel, a German clergyman, appointed by the Society, staid with the Indians during the war, in which they were faithful to this country. And he, and Paulus, a Mohock, whom the Society made schoolmaster, were still doing the best they could there, when the last accounts came. Mr Barclay being settled at New York in 1746, Mr Ogilvie was sent in his stead to the Indians in 1748, who found that many of them were removed into the French territory, and the rest so much addicted to drunkenness, which hath since destroyed a great part of them, that he had little hopes, excepting from the children, and not much from them, unless they were maintained in houses appropriated to their instruction. Now this undertaking would

not only be excessively expensive, particularly because the parents must be well entertained as often as they pleased to visit their children, but in all likelihood fruitless, considering their dispositions with respect to their children already mentioned. Mr Ogilvie took one by way of trial, cloathed, maintained, and instructed him. But his friends fetched him away, lest he should learn to despise his own nation. Notwithstanding all this, Mr Ogilvie continued his endeavours there, till he was carried off in 1758, for his Majesty's service, by the commander in chief of his forces in those parts. There are still, or lately were, hopes of his return; in the mean time, the Rev. Mr Brown supplies his place.

Besides these attempts, and several other occasional ones by several missionaries, one of which, by Mr Beach, he saith, was frustrated by the Dissenters prejudicing the Indians against him*; there was a resolution taken by the Society in 1743, to essay the conversion of the Moskitto Indians, which Mr Hobart hath misrepresented. He saith, *the Society spent so much time in endeavouring to persuade either the Indians themselves, or the Government of Jamaica, to support the missionary, that though the letter from the Indians, requesting assistance, bears date May 19. 1739, yet Mr Prince, at the time of his death, July 25. 1748, had not reached the place of his mission*†. Any reader would conclude from hence, that the letter from the Indians was either written to the Society, or instantly communicated to them, and that the delay arose wholly from their unwillingness to part with their money on the occasion. But the truth is, that the Indians applied in 1739, to Mr Trelawney, Governor of Jamaica, without naming the Society, whose first knowledge of their application was in the latter end of the year 1742: that on this they wrote immediately to the Governor, not to persuade any persons to contribute, but solely to enquire whether the Indians were able or the Jamaicans willing, which was surely a justifiable piece of prudence: that as soon as they had his answer, giving no ground to hope for pecuniary assistance, which was in a few months, they agreed to send a missionary and schoolmaster; that Mr Prince, then in America, being recommended to them for this work shortly after, they agreed without delay to accept him, if he brought

* Second Vindication, or Address, page 70.
page 141.

† Hobart's second Address,

brought proper testimonials; but that objections were made to him from thence, which could not be fully discussed under a considerable time: that when his character was cleared, he was directed to come over, and ordained; that he returned as soon as he could, but died on his way from Jamaica to the place of his destination; that on hearing this, the Society ordered another missionary to be provided, but no one could be got. Evidently there was no backwardness in this case; but assistance was most readily sent to Indians not comprehended within the letter of the charter, not being in any of his Majesty's colonies; on which account the treasury refused Mr Prince the usual bounty granted to missionaries, and it was made up to him by the Society, who might easily and plausibly have excused themselves from engaging in this matter, if they had not really had it at heart.

From these various attempts it appears, that the Society have always been desirous, always endeavouring to make impressions on the Indians. And from their bad success with those on whom they bestowed the most pains, it appears, that notwithstanding their seeming good inclinations towards Christianity, and their petitions to be instructed in it, on which the Doctor lays so much weight *, they were either insincere, or quickly changed their minds, and grew intractable; so that appointing more missionaries, if the Society could have found them, would probably have been little else than *sinking more money*, if I may presume to imitate his style, *in the Indian gulph* †, instead of making *those tribes in general professed Christians*, which he desires to have it thought would have been the consequence. His Presbyterian and Congregational friends have had a much longer space of time for this work than the Society; they have also lived in great numbers amongst the Indians, which is another advantage. Yet I fear the fact is rather, that few Indians are left in New England, than that many are Christians. And though the Doctor tells us, that two missionaries, lately sent from Boston to the five, otherwise six nations, gave *very encouraging accounts of their disposition* ‡, one cannot help doubting, whether these accounts will end in any thing better than the above-mentioned like accounts given to the Society. I heartily wish they may. But surely

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* Page 100, 106.

† page 109.

‡ page 105.

ly as yet, it is too early to insult us with the superiority of their successes to ours.

The Doctor saith, Mr Barclay's *mission was starved**: I hope the contrary hath appeared. Much less was it starved to propagate Episcopacy in New England, for at that time the Society had scarce any missionaries there; yet in a great measure it failed like the rest. And therefore it is very unjust to impute the failure of any to that cause, when it may be so naturally imputed to those which produced the same effect before; and are likely, though not so likely, to do it again. However, in the beginning of the year 1756, the Society consulted some of their American friends, whether a few Indian boys might not be procured, and taught in the colleges of New York and Philadelphia, and sent from thence to instruct their countrymen. The answers to them represented great difficulties of obtaining children, greater still of keeping them long enough; and no small danger of national resentment, if any accident should happen to any of them. The Society notwithstanding, the College of New York being not as yet in a condition to receive any such children, resolved to give 100 l. a-year towards educating some in that of Philadelphia, in which they had hope also of future assistance. But a fresh war soon broke out. Now, in a time of war, and it should be remembered, that there have been very frequent ones since the incorporation of the Society, some taking their rise in Europe, some only in America, little or nothing can be done, even with the friendly Indians, in favour of religion. On the late peace with France, another Indian war hath unexpectedly followed. When God in his mercy shall permit those regions to enjoy tranquility again, it will be a proper season to resume this project. In the mean while, our Society hath agreed with that of 1661, to send jointly a lay instructor to the six nations, as soon as it is safe, and to bear much the greatest part of the expence. The Doctor, it is hoped, will, on considering these things, retract his assertion, that *little more can be said, than that the Indians have not been wholly neglected by the Society*†. At least, as it hath never been charged with remissness in this article, either by the government at home, or by any of the successive governors abroad, this may surely be

* page 104.

† page 100.

be accounted as considerable a presumption in its behalf, as his opinion is against it. And I dare say the promises, which it voluntarily and freely made to the King on his accession, will be faithfully kept, as far as the means of fulfilling them can be found.

With respect to the negroes, the Doctor is not particular in his accusation of the Society, and therefore a general answer will suffice. He observes justly, that *our West India islands abound with them* *, and so do some of our plantations on the continent. But in both they live under the absolute government, chiefly of hard masters; too many of whom forbid them to be instructed in religion, and others deprive them of time for it, by making it necessary that on Sundays they should work for themselves. Where they are allowed to attend the minister of the parish, they are properly under his care; and where negroes abound most, the parishes are in general so well endowed, that the Society at present have not, and need not have missionaries in them; but provision, even for the lowest of the people, may be easily made without them. Where they have missionaries, the negroes are understood to be part of their flock, whom they are strictly charged not to neglect. In those places where there are no ministers, it is impossible to appoint a separate missionary or catechist for the negroes of each family, and almost impossible to assemble those of distant families together. The proprietors of large numbers of them are usually well able to get them instructed by some of their upper servants, or a neighbouring schoolmaster; and if they are unwilling, would be very apt to defeat the endeavours of persons appointed by the Society. If such in any place, as are well disposed, will form any reasonable plan for the instruction of the negroes belonging to them, or near them, which they may contrive much better on the spot, than the Society can at a distance, they will be sure to receive as much help from it, as they can expect. The Society hath for many years maintained Catechists for the Negroes in the two great cities of New York and Philadelphia, with very good effect. And of late they have been blamed for it, as overdoing, because the inhabitants may well bear the burthen themselves. However this may be, they can truly answer to the Doctor's charge, that they have refused no assistance towards the conversion

version of the negroes, which they have been asked, or saw how to give; and particularly, that they have withdrawn none since the increase of their missions in New England. On the contrary, they have extended their care far beyond the literal bounds of their charter, and in 1751 appointed a very worthy missionary, with a salary of 70*l.* a-year, to instruct the Negroes in Africa: where he continued five years, and then returned to England on account of his health; having first sent over to the Society three boys of good families, to be educated here under their direction. One of these is dead; the other two have been maintained, though as frugally as was proper, yet at no small expence, and taught whatever would fit them to propagate Christianity in their native country, to which they are now on the point of going back. The greatest part of this the Doctor must have known from the abstracts, but hath mentioned nothing of it. For it would have been hard to reconcile with his accusation of the Society, that they have disregarded every thing else, to propagate Episcopacy.

The last head of his charge of neglect relates to the colonies, unprovided of a competent number of ministers. Here he saith, that *though he will not affirm it for truth, yet he hath been very credibly informed, that people in some of the Southern Colonies, and particularly in those parts of North Carolina, which were entirely destitute of ministers, had made earnest and repeated applications to the Society for missionaries, sometimes without any answer for years together, and at last without success: and that some sensible and serious persons from that country, several years ago, he thinks, gave him the same account; but that whether they did or not they made such a representation of their sad state, for want of ministers, that at the moment of his writing, it was not in his power to refrain from tears in reflecting on it.* And then he makes his usual charitable addition, that *perhaps the Society had it not in their power to comply with these solicitations, by reason of their large expence in the noble design of supporting and encreasing little Episcopal parties, or factions, in New England**. So the Doctor's credible information of what he will not affirm for truth, and his thinking he remembers what he is not sure he ever heard, is produced against the Society, to justify a conjecture

* Page 97, 98.

jecture about their motive for acting as they never did act. Indeed, that the poor people, over whose case he hath wept so long after, would have accepted ministers from the Society, is far from certain; nor is it likely from several parts of his book, that he would have reckoned the want of Episcopal ministers any great calamity. At least, I cannot learn from the books of the Society, which have been consulted on this occasion, that any applications, made to them from North Carolina, have been rejected or postponed. But it appears, that they sent a missionary thither in 1703, who was discouraged by the inconveniencies of the climate and country, by the intestine feuds of the people, by the profaneness of many of them, and the indifference of others to all religion; that on his return they sent two more in 1707, who after a few years were also wearied out; and again two in 1711, who used their best endeavours, for several years, but succeeded no better, and at last quitted the undertaking. Yet all of them were men of very good characters, as the inhabitants acknowledged. On a fresh application, a sixth missionary was appointed in 1722, who died the next year, and a seventh in 1725, who seems to have despaired like his predecessors *. Then the inhabitants, I believe, were for a time left to themselves, and very insensible of the unhappiness of their condition. But gradually the Society supplied them a-new; and for some years past they have had more clergymen amongst them, though at most perhaps but seven at once, than ever they had before; and therefore they have not been neglected for the sake of Episcopizing New England, as the Doctor suggests. The Society hath acquainted them long ago, that if they were willing to do what they were well able towards maintaining more missionaries, it would be glad to assist them. But instead of this, they have used those ill, in many ways, whom they have had already. Particularly, though they have made laws, both formerly and lately, for salaries to ministers, they have been temporary, and insufficient, and ill executed. And when the present Governor once thought he had put things on such a footing that the people might maintain their own ministers entirely, the Society could not find ministers to send over to him; which Dr Mayhew himself will allow they would have done

* See Humphrey's, p. 128, - 143.

done readily in this case, if they had been able, because it would have cost them nothing. Indeed we have not persons enough in orders to serve the parishes of England properly; and therefore it must be difficult to engage a sufficient number for the plantations. But the difficulty is much greater to provide them for the Southern ones, than for New England, where many are content to come over and be ordained, provided they may return to officiate amongst their relations and friends. And this is one considerable reason of the larger proportion of missions in that province, which the Doctor ascribes entirely to a quite different cause.

Relying on his proofs, that the Society have misapplied a part of the money intrusted with them, he endeavours to compute how much it is, and shows the same inclination to exaggerate in this, as in every thing. Having confuted those proofs, I shall not follow him through the dark into the random calculations built upon them. He would have it thought that in 25 years the sum hath amounted to 35,000*l.* with which, he saith, *forty or fifty missions might have been comfortably maintained amongst the Heathens and in heathenish places, every year, for more than 30 years past* *. Now if fifty missionaries are to be paid for 32 years out of 35,000*l.* they will not have each 22*l.* a-year. And if only forty missionaries were to be paid out of it for only 30 years, they would have but 29*l.* a-year. The Doctor, I believe, would not undertake such a mission with such a salary. He saith, the 30*l.* a-year given to Mr Barclay was *not half a proper support* for him, though he was only a young catechist, and had 30*l.* more from the Assembly of New York †. But no matter how inconsistent the reckonings are, provided each in its turn will bear hard on the Society.

An additional charge, brought by him, is, that the Society hath obtained contributions by sermons, representing the work in which they are engaged, to be merely the propagation of Christianity, though a considerable part of it hath been the propagation of the Church of England; that in this they have imitated the practice of the Romish Society *de propaganda fide*, though the preachers before them have condemned it as unfair; that thus the Dissenters in England have been misled to

encourage

* page 95.

† page 104.

encourage designs against churches of their own communion in New England, and *some thousands of Pounds* have been *drawn from them*, which have in part been applied to that purpose*. Now in truth, the Society have made it their business to do just what their preachers represent them to have been doing, excepting that they have not been able to do so much towards the conversion of the Indians and Negroes. Whilst there were but few persons in the Massachusetts and Connecticut, destitute of such modes of public worship as they could attend, few or no missionaries were sent thither, and the earlier sermons took no notice of this case. When they increased, provision was gradually made for them; the preachers mentioned it in general terms; the present Archbishop of Canterbury mentioned it very explicitly above twenty years ago: and at the end of the sermons, both before and since, lists of the missionaries, their places of residence and their salaries, with accounts of the state of their several congregations, have been published annually. Surely this is far remote from fraudulent dealing. And no one, that was at all attentive to the proceedings of the Society, could be ignorant of this part of them; though Dr Mayhew thinks Bishop Butler was, when he preached before it, which is incredible in the nature of the thing, and false in fact. The Popish Society *de propaganda* never was blamed in sermons before ours, for supplying those of their own communion with the means of their own worship; but for making it their principal employment to bring over other Christians to that worship, which ours hath not done. And if the Dissenters have contributed any thing considerable to the support of our missionaries, they must be presumed to have done it with their eyes open, and either to have chosen rather to assist Episcopalians in that mode of public worship, than let them be without any; or to have liked the general design of the Society so well, as not to be influenced by their dislike of its management in this particular. But I believe the truth is, that the Dissenters, at least for many years past, have contributed little or nothing. I know not that any of them is, or lately hath been, a member and subscriber, or hath made any present, or left any legacy to the Society. Nor have they been called upon, when the crown hath appointed collections

for it. But some, if not many of them, have taken great pains to dissuade members of the Church of England from giving on such occasions. And though I should mistake in any of these points, yet, on the whole, the Society would certainly come off very well in respect of the Dissenters, if they would neither do it good nor harm.

But further, probably much more money hath been given to the Society by the members in the Church of England on account of the provision which it hath made for the Episcopalians in Massachusetts and Connecticut, than they would have given if it had made none. Many of those amongst us, who are zealous for the support of Christianity abroad, are zealous also, tho' in a lower degree, for the support of our own church there; especially in places, where, without their help, it cannot support itself. And all such will naturally be more liberal to both designs, when thus joined, if indeed they can be called two, than they would to one of them, if divided. Persons are not obliged to confine the whole of their charity to that one purpose, which they think the best, but may allowably distribute it amongst all which they think are good. Nor is uniting these two purposes what the Doctor would represent it*, preferring or equalling the peculiarities of the Church of England to the interests of the gospel, any more than the yearly contribution of the Dissenters to the keeping up of their smaller congregations here, is preferring or equalling their peculiarities to the interests of the gospel. They think, both may be kept up by one and the same act, so do we. They contribute to maintain public worship amongst their poorer brethren, without designing to *presbyterianize* England; we contribute to maintain it amongst ours, without designing to *episcopize* New England. It would be absurd in us to charge them with the former; it is equally absurd in them to charge us with the latter. If indeed the case of the Episcopalians in the Massachusetts and Connecticut doth not, by the Charter of the Society, come under its care, bounties to them are at present conveyed through wrong hands. But I apprehend it doth, and think that hath been proved. At least, the givers in general have all along had the opportunity of knowing

ing that part of their gifts was applied to this case by the Society, yet they have never signified their disapprobation, and therefore it hath understood itself to have been answering their intentions. Nothing hath been clandestinely kept back or diverted another way from what was professed. In these circumstances, the guilt of Ananias and Sapphira is very unjustly thrown out *in terrorem* by the Doctor *, according to the old custom of his party, which I hoped had been quite laid aside, of discharging misapplied texts of scripture in the faces of such as happened to offend them. But to return: It is very possible, that the desire of supplying the New England Episcopalians with ministers, may have produced donations of as much money to the Society, as it hath expended on those ministers; now if so, other parts have not suffered on their account. And should these benefactors be brought to think the Society an improper channel for such their bounty, or should it be forbidden to employ in this manner any share of what it receives, the consequence might be, that they would withdraw a proportion of their present liberality, as the Society hath signified in a letter to the New Hampshire ministers, it hath good reason to think they would †, and establish a separate fund, by which means the condition of the Episcopalians might be little, if at all, worse than before, and the Doctor farther than ever from being pleased. For the new managers would certainly be more zealous for promoting the interests of the Church of England, than the Society have been, even in his own imagination.

The Doctor supposes the Defenders of the Society's conduct to argue, that it may allowably support missions for converting the New Englanders to Episcopacy, because this is needful to facilitate the conversion of the Indians to Christianity ‡. Now they have said, and very truly, as the Charter of William and Mary doth, that bringing our own people to a *good life and orderly conversation*, is requisite to win the neighbouring nations *to the Christian faith*. They may have said also, and very truly, that the great numbers and great variety of wild sectaries, in our colonies, are a lamentable hindrance to the progress of our religion. But I question, whether they

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have

* P. 118. † See Beach's vindication or address, p. 31, 32. ‡ p. 119, &c.

have ever applied either of these observations to the *New England Presbyterians* or Congregationalists; and yet more, whether any one of them hath so much as hinted, that they must be made Episcopalians, as a step towards making the heathens around them Christians. At least, the Bishop of St David's, whom alone the Doctor hath quoted, intimates no such thing. And, till he produces some authority for the assertion, he must be understood to put this plea into our mouths, only as an opportunity, partly of introducing his wit, about sending to convert the Scotch, the Genevans, and the Man in the moon, of which I leave him without envy in full possession; partly of suggesting in scripture language, that our missionaries, *entering into the New England sheepfold under this indirect pretence, are thieves and robbers.* But then he is careful to subjoin immediately, that *he doth not mean to call them by these opprobrious names, or to give them any personal affront* *. Good man, who can suspect him of it?

In all that I have hitherto said, I am far from intending to affirm, that the Society hath not laid out in the Massachusetts and Connecticut too large a proportion of the money put into their hands, considering the necessities of other provinces. They have a discretionary power within the bounds of their trust; and whilst they confine themselves to those bounds, the money which they receive is altogether at their free disposal, and so far *their own*; however, the Doctor is pleased to cavil at that expression †, when used very harmlessly by Mr Apthorp. But still they ought to use their power judiciously, and in that they may have failed. For what Society of men hath not? Even the Doctor's too blameless Societies ‡ might possibly exhibit some tincture of human frailty, if they did not warily keep their transactions unpublished, whilst those of ours lie open to all the world. Pressing solicitors are always likelier to prevail, especially if they will contribute freely to the undertaking for which they are suitors, than those who are less earnest though better able. And such the New England Episcopalians have been, compared with the inhabitants of other colonies. When the earlier applications were made by them, it could not be foreseen whether more would follow. So one mission was settled after another, till they be-

came

* Page 123. † Page 116,—118. ‡ Page 101, 134.

came insensibly numerous ; and when many requests had been granted, it was the harder to refuse others, for which the same plea could be made. Some members of the Society approved this increase, others thought it was going too far. And in bodies of men, whose opinions differ, there must be mutual condescensions, and time allowed for one side to come over into the sentiments of the other, else they cannot proceed together. But in the last five or six years, I believe, no new mission hath been appointed in the Massachusetts or Connecticut, which had not been promised before, excepting that of Cambridge. And now for some time past, the Society have excused themselves from complying with any applications from that quarter. Surely this alone is no inconsiderable argument, that proselyting those two districts to Episcopacy hath not been the point in view.

What is past, as the Doctor observes, *cannot be recalled*. But if mistakes have happened, they may be avoided for the future, and the Society is *not above altering its measures* *. Doubtless it would have liked, and might have expected, civiler and fairer treatment, than he hath vouchsafed to give it. But however, *fas est & ab hoste doceri*. It cannot desert and abandon the congregations which it hath taken under its protection, unless they should become either too rich to need its assistance, or too inconsiderable to deserve it. But more care may be used to know, when either of these things falls out. All forwardness in missionaries to molest persons of other persuasions, and all encouragement of parties and factions in order to serve ecclesiastical schemes, may be strictly prohibited, and on reasonable complaint severely checked. The eyes of the Society may be turned more attentively to the dark corners of the colonies, to the methods which promise well for the more effectual instruction of the negroes, and to the openings for doing good amongst the Indians, which his Majesty's new acquisitions will probably disclose. A friendly correspondence may also be carried on between some of the members of that body, and some of the Presbyterian or Congregational ministers, whose dispositions are mild and ingenuous ; and thus animosities and jealousies may by degrees be extinguished

* Page 133.

guished, of which, I am persuaded, the Society is very desirous.

Therefore I proceed now to the last part of what I proposed, taking into consideration the scheme of appointing bishops to reside in our American colonies. The Church of England is, in its constitution, Episcopal. It is, in some of the plantations, confessedly the established church; in the rest are many congregations adhering to it; and through the late extension of the British Dominions, and the influence of other causes, it is likely that there will be more. All members of every church are, according to the principles of liberty, intitled to every part of what they conceive to be the benefits of it, entire and complete, so far as consists with the welfare of civil government; yet the members of our church in America do not thus enjoy its benefits, having no Protestant Bishop within 3000 miles of them; a case, which never had its parallel before in the Christian world. Therefore it is desired, that two or more Bishops may be appointed for them, to reside where his Majesty shall think most convenient; that they may have no concern in the least with any persons who do not profess themselves to be of the Church of England, but may ordain ministers for such as do; may confirm their children, when brought to them at a fit age for that purpose, and take such oversight of the Episcopal clergy, as the Bishop of London's Commissaries in those parts have been empowered to take, and have taken, without offence. But it is not desired in the least that they should hold courts to try matrimonial or testamentary causes, or be vested with any authority, now exercised either by provincial governors or subordinate magistrates, or infringe or diminish any privileges and liberties enjoyed by any of the laity, even of our own communion. This is the real and only scheme that hath been planned for Bishops in America; and whoever hath heard of any other, hath been misinformed through mistake or design. The American Dissenters from our communion, would think it insupportably grievous to have no ministers but such as received ordination in England or Ireland, or to be withheld from the use of any religious rite, which they esteemed as highly as we do Confirmation; or to have their churches destitute of a superintendency, which they conceived to be of apostolical institution,

tution. I should, in such a case, be a zealous advocate for them, as not yet enjoying the full toleration to which they had a right. And surely they ought to ask their consciences very seriously, why they oppose our application for such indulgence as they would claim for themselves; and whether indeed such opposition is not downright persecution, and that in a matter merely spiritual, without the mixture of any temporal concern.

The Doctor is a great deal too vehement to propose his objections distinctly, therefore I will endeavour to do it for him. He saith, *the state of religion is much better amongst those of his communion in America, than it is even in England, under the immediate eye and documents of the venerable Bishops**; and that *should any be sent thither, it is to be hoped they will have better success than the Bishops have hitherto had here†*. Now certainly, the state of religion here is far from being what we have cause to wish it were. Whether it be worse than in New England, I am unable to pronounce; but supposing it to be so, the Doctor himself saith, that *a rationale might be given of the fact, without any reflection on our church‡*. And the question, relative to the present point, is not, where the state of religion is best, but whether it will not be better amongst the American Episcopalians, if they have Bishops to superintend their Clergy, and do the other offices belonging to that function, than if they have none. He calls church government by bishops, *the yoke of Episcopal bondage§*. And certainly bondage is a dreadful evil, and religious the worst of all. But what yoke of bondage do either Churchmen or Dissenters suffer in England, where Bishops have been so long? All church authority was formerly too heavy; but surely the Episcopal now is as moderate as any, and it is proposed to be reduced yet lower in America, and Dissenters will be no way subject to it. He saith, *the affair of Bishops hath lately been, and probably now is, in agitation in England; and the Society spare neither endeavours, applications, nor expence, in order to effect their grand design of Episcopizing all New England, as well as the other colonies||*. Now most of the colonies were originally Episcopal. And I cannot learn, nor I believe will the Doctor affirm, that the inhabitants of any of them, be they of what sect

* p. 39.

† p. 40.

‡ p. 39.

§ p. 146.

|| p. 89.

fect they will, groan under that burthen, or have reason to do so. The imagination of a design to Episcopize the rest, I have shown to be altogether groundless. But further, they may be Episcopized without sending Bishops amongst them; and bishops may be sent amongst them, without any intention of episcopizing them.

Dean Kennet, confessed to be a worthy man *, writing to Dr Colman in 1712, concerning the Society's desire to leave *Bishops settled in the foreign parts committed to his care*, saith, as Dr Mayhew himself quotes him, *I hope your churches would not be jealous of it* †. Certainly therefore, he did not know any cause why they should be jealous of it. Archbishop Tenison, who, though a very good Churchman, is allowed to have meant no harm to any Dissenters any where, left by his will 1000*l.* to encourage the appointment of two Bishops, one on the Continent, and another in the Islands of America. Bishop Butler, whom the Doctor praises so highly and so justly, was a hearty friend to this scheme, and left 500*l.* to the Society. Bishop Benson, whose Christian and catholic temper is well known to almost as many as ever heard his name, bequeathed to it such a legacy as he was able, *to be added to the fund for settling Bishops in our plantations in America, hoping* [these are his own words] *that a design, so necessary and unexceptionable, cannot but at last be put in execution.*

The Doctor professes himself an enemy to it, because *of the narrow, censorious, and bitter spirit that prevails in too many of the Episcopalians in America* ‡. But may not he think too ill of their spirit? I verily believe he doth. Or if he doth not, is there not an equal share of the same spirit in too many of the Presbyterians and Congregationalists there? And are invectives and acts of unkindness the way to mend it on either side? Or may not the appointment of proper Bishops, conduce greatly to mend it on the side of the Episcopalians? But he fears, that *if this growing party should get a major vote in the houses of Assembly, tests might be obtained to exclude all but Conformists from posts of honour and emolument, and all men be taxed for the support of Bishops and their underlings; and therefore he cannot think of the Church of England's gaining ground there to any great degree, and especially of seeing Bishops fixed upon*

upon them, without great reluctance *. Now this very passage implies it not to have gained ground, as yet, to any great degree: in another, already quoted, he scarcely seems to think it grows at all; and in a third, though he falsely supposes the promotion of it to be a *favourite point*, pursued at a *vast expence*, he still *hopes in God it will never be carried* †. The likelihood therefore of its obtaining a majority, is by no means considerable. Now if it were, would excluding Bishops be any mighty guard against it? So that either the admission of them will be very safe, or the Doctor must think of more vigorous measures than have hitherto been used, to prevent the increase of this malignant faction. But supposing the Episcopalians were the majority there, why should a test law follow? Is there any such law in the Episcopalian colonies? Or even though there were, can it be imagined, that if a prevailing party in New England were wild enough to propose, his Majesty would ever be advised to pass one for that country? The terror of being taxed for bishops and their underlings, as he civilly calls the body of the clergy, is yet more chimerical than the former; as an act for that purpose would affect a much greater number of persons, and in a still tenderer point. Tithes are paid in England to the clergy by virtue of grants, which laid that burthen upon estates many ages before the present possessors enjoyed them. But could an act of Parliament be obtained now to impose a tax never known before, of this or the like nature, on this whole nation, Dissenters not excepted, for the maintenance of an ecclesiastical hierarchy? No body will pretend it could. And with what modesty then can the Doctor suggest, that such a thing might be feared in New England? Besides, would it have been a good reason at the Revolution, for debarring the Dissenters from the full exercise of their church government and worship, that, if they obtained it, they might perhaps increase till they got a *major vote* in both houses, and then might enact no mortal knows what?

But indeed the poor man's fears, if you will believe him, run to vastly further lengths yet. He imagines already himself and his brethren driven to the last extremities by these savage Episcopalians, and vents his lamentations in such moving strains, that I must transcribe them; for they are the

* page 129.

† page 90.

finest flight of oratory in his whole book, though it is adorned with many. "Will they never let us rest in peace, except *"where all the weary are at rest?* Is it not enough that they persecuted us out of the old world? Will they pursue us into the new, to convert us here?—What other new world remains as a sanctuary for us from their oppressions, in case of need? Where is the Columbus to explore one for, and pilot us to it, before we are consumed by the flames, or deluged in a flood of Episcopacy? For my own part, I can hardly ever think of our being pursued thus from world to world, without calling to mind, though without applying [to be sure] that passage in the Revelation of St John: *And to the Woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might flee into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished—from the face of the Serpent. And the Serpent cast out of his mouth water, as a flood, after the Woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood*.*" Happily, soon after, the Doctor recovers from his panic into some degree of composedness, and saith, *It is not his design however to dishonour the more moderate and Christian spirit of the English Bishops since the Revolution, and particularly of this day, by comparing it to the persecuting antichristian spirit of many Prelates, antecedent to that glorious era of British liberty.* But why then such dismal apprehensions? why such outcries? where are the persecutors? where is the dragon? All the world must see, the Doctor himself must see, that his declamation is quite foreign from the purpose; and on his first recollection he should have been ashamed of it, and have struck it out. But paternal tenderness would not let him destroy so pathetic a rant on so darling a subject.

Not only the present bishops, but the present age is grown milder in religious matters. Protestants in general, of all denominations, in all countries, but especially in the British dominions, bear with each other far better than they did a century ago; and the smallest attempts towards an oppressive enlargement of spiritual power, would immediately be crushed with indignation by our Legislature. The Dissenters here know it well; those abroad can hardly fail to know it; and so far as human foresight can reach, both the moderation of the clergy, and

and the watchfulness of the laity over them, are much more likely to increase than diminish. But above all, a Bishop in New England would find abundant reason to be cautious of exerting himself too far, and very thankful, if, with all his caution, he could live in any tolerable degree of peace. Therefore the Doctor would not need to be at all anxious for the liberty of his dear country, though one were to be placed there. But to make him perfectly easy, he may be assured, that this neither is, nor ever was, intended or desired; which must certainly be admitted as another proof still, that Episcopalizing that province hath not been *the favourite scheme*, nor indeed any scheme, of the society. During the course of more than fifty years, that sending Bishops to America hath been in agitation, I believe no single person, there or here, hath once named or thought of New England as a proper place for the residence of one; but Episcopal colonies have always been proposed. And this the Doctor might so easily know, that one cannot help thinking he must know it. But then alas, if he had owned it, what would have become, not only of his pompous harangue already mentioned, but of his ingenious suppositions, that Mr Apthorp was *right reverendly inclined**, and that a certain *superb edifice*, near *Harvard College*, was even *from the foundation designed for the palace of one of the humble successors of the apostles*†? So much wit and archness, how greatly soever the Doctor abounds in it, would have been too great a sacrifice to make to dull truth and fact.

We confess indeed, that we cannot perceive why the Presbyterians and Congregationalists in New England, might not as safely breathe the same air with a Bishop, as their brethren in Old England do. However, we are unwilling to disquiet any of them, by importing and settling amongst them a creature, which it seems they some of them account to be so obnoxious. Only we hope, that his occasionally travelling thro' the country cannot infect it very dangerously. Moravian Bishops are authorised by law to live, and act as such, where they will in our plantations. Popish Bishops reside here, and go about to exercise every part of their function, without offence and without observation. Dissenting ministers reside here, and hold their meetings for ordinations, and whatever

purposes they think fit; and these assemblies give us no umbrage. What we desire with respect to New England, is much less: that a Bishop may not reside there, but resort thither from time to time, to officiate amongst those of our own communion. His constant abode will be in whatever province is willing to receive him, with his Majesty's approbation: who will certainly, for reasons of every kind, send such persons in this character, as are least likely to cause uneasiness. Surely the Doctor and his friends cannot thwart a scheme of this nature, and call themselves patrons of religious liberty.

It is possible, though it is strange, that when he wrote his *observations*, he might misunderstand the Society's intention, both in sending missionaries to New England and desiring American Bishops. I hope it is now sufficiently cleared up; and if he is still dissatisfied, I entreat him to consider, for all men ought, *what manner of spirit he is of**. He hath very good abilities, and a zeal that would be highly commendable, if it were duly tempered with charity. But he seems to have naturally a most vehement spirit, and to have imbibed, perhaps in his early days, equally vehement prepossessions against the very name of Bishops, and every thing connected with them. I am sensible that these things plead in his excuse: for they have often hurried men, who on the whole meant well, not only into great unfairness of arguing, but far worse faults. And though I have made use of some freedom in setting forth his mistakes and partialities, yet if such treatment, as he hath given Mr Apthorp, was designed for *the benevolent end of shewing him to himself*†, surely my treatment of him will not be imputed to any unkind motive. If he amends upon admonition, he will deserve much respect; if not, much pity.

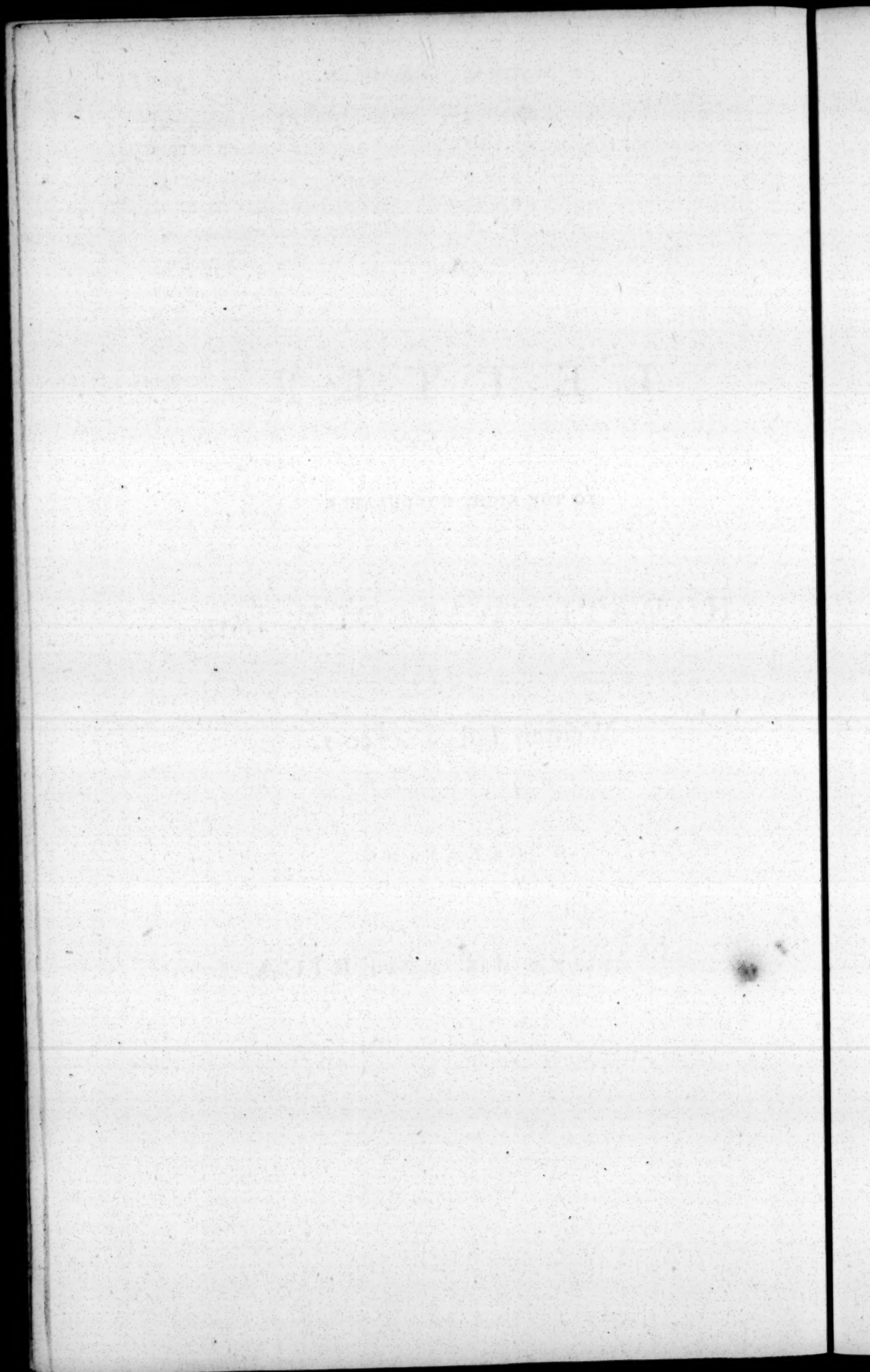
But however he may take what I have written, I hope others, particularly the Dissenters, both English and American, as many as happen to see it, will consider it calmly: and neither indulge fears without foundation, nor affect fears which they have not, in order to hinder their Episcopal brethren from enjoying what they have a right to. Our inclination is to live in friendship with all the Protestant churches. We assist and protect those on the Continent of Europe as well as we are able. We show our regard to that of Scotland as often

* Luke ix. 55.

† page 145.

ten as we have an opportunity, and believe the members of it are sensible that we do. To those who differ from us in this part of the kingdom, we neither attempt nor wish any injury. And we shall gladly give proofs to every denomination of Christians in our colonies, that we are friends to a toleration even of the most intolerant, as far as it is safe; and willing that all mankind should possess all the advantages, religious and civil, when they can demand either in law or reason. But with those, who approach nearer to us in purity of faith, and brotherly love, we are desirous to cultivate a freer communication, passing over all former disgusts, as we beg that they would. If we give them any seeming cause of complaint, we hope they will signify it in the most amicable manner. If they publish it, we hope they will preserve fairness and temper. If they fail in either, we must bear it with patience, but be excused from replying. If any writers on our side have been less cool, or less civil, than they ought and designed to have been, we are sorry for it, and exhort them to change their stile, if they write again. For it is the duty of all men, how much soever they differ in opinion, to agree in mutual good will and kind behaviour.

A L E T-



A

L E T T E R

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HORATIO WALPOLE, Esq.

Written Jan. 9. 1750-1.

C O N C E R N I N G

BISHOPS IN AMERICA.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Letter was found among the papers of the late Archbishop Secker. It was written in consequence of a letter, dated May 9. 1750, from the late Lord Walpole, to the late Dr Sherlock, Bishop of London; which was communicated by the latter to Bishop Secker, Jan. 2. 1750-1.

It is now printed in obedience to an order left with it under his Grace's own hand, (dated May 25. 1759) in these words:

Let the Letter, written by me to Mr Walpole, concerning Bishops in America, be printed after my death.

THO. CANT.

A
L E T T E R

T O

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HORATIO WALPOLE, Esq.

St James's Westminster, July 9. 1730-1.

S I R,

I Return you my humble thanks for the honour you have done me, in communicating to me your Letter to the Bishop of London. I have read it with all that attention and regard, which is so justly due to your superior abilities, and long experience, and meritorious zeal for our present happy establishment, and the public welfare. But still I cannot see the scheme, to which it relates, in the same light that you do. And though, if ever he hath conversed with you on the subject since, he hath doubtless said every thing material by way of reply, which I can suggest, and much more; yet as he doth not seem to have laid any thing further before you in writing, I beg leave to trouble you with what hath occurred to me: which, as the session is not yet begun, you may possibly have some leisure to look upon.

The thing proposed is, that two or three persons should be ordained Bishops, and sent into our American colonies, to administer Confirmation, and give Deacons and Priests orders to proper candidates, and exercise such jurisdiction over the cler-

gy of the Church of England in those parts, as the late Bishop of London's commissaries did, or such as it might be thought proper that any future commissaries should, if this design were not to take place. The questions, that arise on this proposal, are: Is it a reasonable one in itself? And if it be, are there any such dangers of its being extended to introduce exorbitant church powers, or of its raising uneasinesses abroad or at home, as may notwithstanding, at least for the present, be just objections against it?

The reasonableness of the proposal, abstractedly considered, you seem, sir, to admit. And indeed it belongs to the very nature of Episcopal churches, to have Bishops at proper distances, presiding over them. Nor was there ever before, I believe, in the Christian world, an instance of such a number of such churches, or a tenth part of that number, with no Bishop amongst them, or within some thousands of miles from them. But the consideration of the Episcopal acts which are requisite, will prove the need of Episcopal residence more fully. Confirmation is an office of our church, derived from the primitive ages; and, when administered with due care, a very useful one. All our people in America see the appointment of it in their prayer-books, immediately after their catechism. And if they are denied it, unless they will come over to England for it; they are in effect prohibited the exercise of one part of their religion. Again, if they are to have no ordinations there, they must either send persons hither to be ordained, or take such as come to them from hence. Sending their sons to so distant a country, and so different a climate, must be very inconvenient and disagreeable: and taking the small pox here is said to be peculiarly fatal to them. The expence also must be grievous to persons of small fortunes; such as most are, who breed up their children for orders: yet not sufficient to bring any accession of wealth to this nation, that would be worth naming, were more of that rank to come. But in fact, very few of them do. Therefore they must be supplied chiefly from hence. And not many in proportion will go from hence, but persons of desperate fortunes, low qualifications, and bad or doubtful characters: who cannot answer, as they ought, the end for which they are designed. And it deserves observation, that a great part of them are Scotch. I need not say
what

what chance there is that Episcopal clergymen of that country may be disaffected to the government. Now, if instead of such, natives of the plantations were bred in their colleges, with a view to orders; notwithstanding which, their young men of fashion would still come to England for polite accomplishments; this would afford convenient opportunities to parents of providing for some of their children handsomely, and encouragement to the inhabitants to build and endow churches, to furnish parsonage-houses, and stock glebes, which now run to ruin for want of it. And clergymen whose families were known, would be more respected, and have a better influence than vagabond strangers. As to the matter of discipline and jurisdiction over the clergy, it would stand just as it hath done hitherto, only with this difference, that the exhortations and directions of a person invested with the Episcopal character, would be more readily and carefully observed by the parish ministers, than those are which proceed from their equals: and misbehaviours might thus be more effectually prevented, than they can afterwards be punished and rectified. Nor is this a point of consequence only to themselves and their hearers, but to the public; as the behaviour of the clergy in general is. And if by reforming them, and introducing better order into the churches of our communion, more of the inhabitants should come over to it, as they naturally will, this would be a further public benefit. For members of the Church of England will think themselves more connected with England than others. And supposing them not to be Jacobites, their acknowledgment of the King's supremacy will incline them to be dutifuller subjects than the Dissenters, who do not acknowledge it.

But allowing the establishment of Bishops in America to be reasonable in itself, the second question is, Whether the danger of increasing church power by means of such an establishment, be not a sufficient objection against it. Now against things evidently right and useful, no dangers ought to be pleaded, but such as are both very probable and great; and from confirming and ordaining, no danger of this kind, I presume, is apprehended. Yet these are the only new powers that will be exercised. No other jurisdiction is desired, for the proposed bishops than the preceding commissaries have enjoyed; and even

that, on this occasion, may be ascertained and limited more accurately, if it be requisite. But here it is asked, How any persons can undertake to promise, that no additional powers shall hereafter be proposed and pressed on the colonies, when Bishops have once been settled? And strictly speaking, indeed, nothing of this nature can ever be promised in any case. But if the Dissenters had been asked, on their applying for a toleration, how they could undertake to promise, that when that point was once settled, nothing further, nothing hurtful to the established church, should ever be proposed and pressed on the government by them, surely this would not have been sufficient to defeat their application. And yet, what could they have answered? Not more, if so much, as can be answered in the present case: that no such thing is at all intended; and that though it were, there would be no danger, either of the intention taking effect, or causing any disturbance.

But on the former of these assertions our sincerity may be questioned. For it is argued, that Bishops doubtless think the powers, which they have in this nation, to be strictly just and reasonable; and consequently must be desirous of their taking place in the colonies. Now, for my own part, and I believe my brethren in general are of the same mind, I have no imagination that Bishops are intitled to, or that it would be right to give them, every where, the same powers, and privileges, that we happen, by the particular constitution of this country to possess here. Several parts of that constitution might perhaps full as well have been formed otherwise. Whether our share of it might or not, I have never set myself to consider; I hope, and am persuaded, it is on the whole as harmless and useful a branch, as many others; and I endeavour, so far as I am concerned, to make it so. But were I to live where bishops were only on the same footing, on which it is now proposed they should be in our plantations, I should no more attempt to raise them higher, than I should to overturn the established form of government in any other respect. It may indeed be prudent to suspect clergymen, ministers of state, all men, to some degree. But it cannot be prudent to refuse doing things that are highly proper, on account of little more than a possibility, that an improper use of them may be hereafter attempted. Some Bishops may be thought peculiarly fond of
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church power, and it concerns them when they are called upon, to defend themselves if they can. But at least I hope we are not all so fond of it, as to be aiming at that point now, though we solemnly profess we are not. Yet I believe there scarce is, or ever was a Bishop of the Church of England, from the Revolution to this day, that hath not desired the establishment of bishops in our colonies. Archbishop Tennison, who was surely no High-churchman, left by his will 1000*l.* towards it. And many more, of the greatest eminence, both dead and living, might be named, who were and are zealous for it: and yet have always been applauded by one party, and censured by the other, for their moderation. Or if bishops, as such, must of course be deemed partial, the Society for propagating the gospel consists partly also of inferior clergymen, partly too of laymen. Now the last cannot so well be suspected of designing to advance ecclesiastical authority. Yet this whole body of men, almost ever since it was in being, hath been making repeated applications for bishops in America; nor have the lay part of it ever refused to concur in them.

But though some, or many of the advocates for this proposal, were inclined to serve wrong purposes by it, is there any likelihood of its effecting those purposes? Some have apprehended just the contrary, that it will tend to the depression of the hierarchy; as it will afford the laity here an example of English Bishops abroad, with no other than spiritual powers: which may tempt them to think of reducing us at home to the same condition. But I should be very willing, for the benefit of those of our communion in the colonies, to run a greater risque, than I conceive this to be. For the fact is so notorious, that all our temporal powers and privileges are merely concessions from the state; and the act of parliament for the suffragan Bishops, under which several were made in the last century, and others may now, exemplifies so fully the possibility of bishops without peerages, and consistory courts; that we need have no fear of any new discovery to our prejudice, from appointing a few such bishops in America. But then the opposite fear, of their growing up to what we are, would it be ever so great an evil if it were to happen, seems as unlikely to happen, as most things. I do not wonder indeed, that persons who were in public stations at the latter end of Queen Anne's,

Anne's, and the beginning of the late King's reign, should have strong impressions remaining in their minds of the terrors of ecclesiastical influence, which was then so grossly abused to such wicked purposes. But whoever attends to the present state of things in this respect, must see that there hath been a prodigious change within the last thirty years. Though too many both of the clergy and the laity are disaffected to the government on one account or another; yet of the former, even the lower part are not near so generally possessed of the wild High-Church notions, as they were. Nor was a time ever known, when the upper part were so universally free from them. And yet it is the upper part only, that can do the least towards supporting any exorbitant pretensions of bishops in the colonies. Then as to the laity, I hope and believe the administration and their friends will show countenance to the clergy, as far as it is necessary; but there is visibly no danger of their giving them any encouragement, that may be hurtful. Amongst the opposers of the administration, few, if any, are at all more prejudiced in their favour. And that regard, which the bulk of the people had for religion and the teachers of it, is greatly diminished, and diminishing daily, to a degree, which I wonder wise men are not alarmed at. For it is as important, even in a political view, that they should be able to do good, as that they should not be able to do harm. Nor do I find, that bigotry to the church prevails amongst the members of it in our colonies; or that there is any chance of their making afterwards imprudent additions to the authority with which their bishops will come to them at first. On the contrary, one plea against the present scheme is, that bishops, even with the lowest powers, will give them jealousy and offence. Now these two opposite dangers cannot both be considerable; and I apprehend neither of them is: but surely the former is the less of the two. The Bishop of London's commissaries, I believe, have gained no accessions to what was granted them originally. And bishops will be still more narrowly watched by the governors, by other sects, by the laity, and even the clergy, of their own communion. Nor will they have a greater dread of any thing, if either so good or so discreet men are chosen, as I promise myself will, than of losing all, by grasping at what doth not belong to them.

Nor

Nor will their patrons here attempt to defend them, in what they cannot but know will ruin them, as they will be appointed by the crown, which, unless I mistake, the commissaries are not; they will be such persons, as the crown can best confide in. And if it be thought necessary, a right of recalling them may be reserved to the King. Whereas I believe he hath not a right of ordering the Bishop of London to recall his commissaries. Upon the whole, if the present disposition of his Majesty's ministers and subjects, in relation to ecclesiastical authority, continues the same, as in all likelihood it will, there can be no danger from bishops in America. And if that disposition should alter back to what it formerly hath been, which God forbid, they will be established with greater powers, than are now desired for them.

It ought to be considered farther, that an act of the last session of parliament, which passed without any opposition from any body, hath expressly established Moravian Bishops in America; who have much higher and stricter notions of church government and discipline than we have. Why then should there be such fear of establishing Bishops of the Church of England? If for want of these, the Moravian Bishops should ordain such ministers for our people as they thought proper; or should they, by administering Confirmation, or by the reverence of their Episcopal character, be continually gaining converts from us; it would be a very undesirable thing on several accounts; particularly on this, that most of them refuse taking oaths, and bearing arms. Besides, there have been Nonjuring Jacobite Bishops in our colonies, not very long since, if there are none now. And Popish ones also, I apprehend have recourse to them from time to time. At least the Bishop of Quebec hath no small influence in a very important new settlement of ours. May not then the neglect of having bishops of our own, expose us to far greater dangers, than the appointment of them can?

But still the third question remains, and is a very material one, whether such an appointment, however harmless and useful it might be otherwise, would not stir up dangerous uneasinesses abroad or at home? And here it is asked, if the members of our church in America would like to have bishops among them, why have they never petitioned for them? Now, surely

surely their omitting it may well be ascribed, in part, to the thoughtlessness of mankind about their religious concerns; which hath been so peculiarly great in those countries, that some of them did not petition for help, when they had no one office of Christianity administered to them; and partly also to this, that probably too many of their clergy think, they may both live more negligently, and have a better chance for preferment now, than if a Bishop were to inspect them, and ordain natives to be their rivals. But the chief reason, I doubt not, is, that the inhabitants of the colonies, living at such a distance, and not knowing when an application to the government might be seasonable; and being assured, that the bishops here, especially the Bishop of London, and the Society for propagating the gospel, would always be attentive to this point, have left it to them. And they to whom it is thus left, have received abundant proofs, that very great numbers of the laity of the Church of England in those countries, of higher as well as lower rank, earnestly desire to have bishops settled there, and think it would be a most valuable public benefit. Nor have they found cause to imagine that any opposition would be made to it from that quarter. Indeed, of course it should be presumed, and none but the very strongest evidence admitted to the contrary, that all persons desire to have within their reach, the means of exercising their religion completely: which those of our communion in America, and they alone of all his Majesty's subjects, have not. It is true, some of them have provided against enlarging the jurisdiction of the commissaries: but none of them have expressed any public reluctance to the appointment of bishops. I have learned from some papers of Bishop Gibson, that there was a design in Charles the Second's time, to place one in Virginia; that letters patent for that purpose are still extant; and that no other reason appears, why the design failed, but that the whole endowment was to have been out of the customs: whereas now it is not intended either to burthen the crown, or tax the subject. Nor can either be done hereafter but by consent of both. Nor is it apprehended, that either will be needful. Some considerable gifts have been already contributed: and probably more will, when the scheme appears likely to take effect. There are likewise other methods that might be proposed.

And

And if they who are against it, think it will miscarry for want of a maintenance for the Bishops, they need not take the trouble of opposing it. But to go on. For above forty years past, the inhabitants there must have had frequent notices, by various ways, that such a design was in agitation: yet I have not heard, that any of them, who are members of our church, have ever signified the least dislike of it. Of late indeed, the Presbyterians or Independants of New England have. But they cannot be intitled to object against placing bishops in any other province, but their own, in which there never was any thought of placing them. Whether they would object against bishops coming to officiate occasionally amongst those of the Episcopal persuasion in that province, I know not. If they should, and persist in it, that may be omitted. But it seems hardly possible that they should, unless the gross misrepresentations, that have been so officiously sent them from hence have made them deaf to all reason. It is true, they fled into America from the oppressions of ecclesiastical power, exercised by bishops. But they cannot fail to know how much that power hath been long since lessened; and the inclinations and the principles of those who are intrusted with it, altered for the better. If they were here at present, they would not think of flying from it. Why then should they be afraid of bishops resorting to their country now and then, without any pretence of authority over them, but merely to perform some religious acts in a few congregations of Episcopal people, that are intermixed with them? This is no more than Dissenting ministers do here by law, and even Popish priests and bishops by connivance.

But at least, before any argument against the scheme can be drawn from the opinion of any of the colonies, it ought to be fairly stated to them. This was the sole intention of the Society for propagating the gospel, in their late order for sending letters into America. They apprehended they might take the liberty of transmitting a true account of the design, when others had taken that of transmitting a false one: and, that endeavouring to procure evidence in relation to so material a point in their cause, against the time it would come to be tried, was not blameable. However, if they judged ill in attempting it, his Majesty's equity, and that of his council, may

doubtless be depended on, that they will not reject this proposal, as disagreeable to the colonies, till a fair inquiry shows, whether it be so or not.

But a farther objection against it is, That however it may be received there, it will immediately raise animosities here; produce declamations in pulpits, controversies in pamphlets, debates in parliament; revive the distinction of high and low among churchmen, and terrify or provoke the Dissenters. Now amongst the clergy, I conceive it can make no dispute: for every man of character amongst them, doth and must wish it success. If indeed it were to be brought upon the carpet, and the administration were to oppose it, some clergymen might be tempted to say indecent things of them. But the present question is not, whether this affair ought to be attempted, if, after being fully weighed, it be disapproved by the ministry: that undoubtedly would be very wrong: but whether there be reason for them to disapprove it. And certainly there is no reason to fear inflaming and exasperating the clergy, by declaring for it: on the contrary, scarce any thing would please them more universally. Nor, I presume, is the danger from pamphlets to be thought very great: for most virulent ones are published daily both against church and state, which yet give the government no terror at all. Contests in parliament indeed would be a matter of more serious concern. But there seems no necessity that this affair should ever come into parliament. For, as the law now stands, suffragan Bishops may be ordained with the King's approbation; and the Bishop of London may send those, instead of presbyters, for his commissaries; and they may confirm and ordain, as well as exercise the jurisdiction which hath been usual there. But, even if the scheme should be brought into parliament, it can be opposed only on these two principles: that Episcopal power is a great grievance in this nation, and that it must rise to an equal height, wherever bishops are: of which two propositions, plain experience proves the former to be false; and I hope I have proved the latter to be so. Still some members may be blinded by ill-will to the ecclesiastical part of our constitution. But surely these are not very many. Besides, the administration will easily quiet such of them as are their friends. Then the Tories must be for bishops, if it be only to preserve their own credit

credit. And the remainder will probably find themselves too inconsiderable to stir.

Therefore the only danger left, is that of alarming and provoking the body of the Dissenters. Now a few busy warm men, are not the body of the Dissenters. And though they may affect to speak in the name of the whole, yet the whole will neither think it right nor prudent to do all that these gentlemen are pleased to intimate: some of whom also, after arguing properly with them, have owned, that they had little or nothing to object against appointing bishops in plantations of the Episcopal communion. Dr Avery, if I am rightly informed, hath acknowledged this to the Archbishop, as Mr Chandler hath to me. And indeed there is no modesty, in saying, we who are not of the established church, demand, as a matter of strict justice, the full exercise of our religion here: but at the same time insist, that the King's Episcopal subjects in America, with whom we have nothing at all to do, shall not, even in those provinces where they are the established church, have the full exercise of theirs. Suppose the Presbyterians, or Independants in America thought as well of Confirmation as we do, and had not amongst them, a proper officer to administer it; would not they think it insufferable to be denied such a one, and put under a necessity of sending their children hither for it, if they would have it? Supposing they were obliged only to send their candidates for the ministry, hither to be ordained; would they have been patient under it as long as we have been? Would they not have cried out loudly and incessantly for relief? For my part, I should have thought them so well entitled to it, as to have been a most hearty and zealous advocate for them. It is not merely from my attachment to the Church of England, that I am a favourer of the scheme in question: but from my love of religious liberty; which, in this point, the members of the Church of England in our colonies do not enjoy. And I cannot imagine how the Dissenters can pretend to be lovers of it, and wish it to be withheld from their fellow-subjects. God forbid that we should ever be moved, by this or any other provocation, to wish it withheld in any instance whatever from the Dissenters. And I believe there never was a time, when the clergy of this land were in so mild a disposition towards them. What-

ever they may plead therefore, it is not fear that induces them to oppose us on this occasion; for they well know that we have neither power nor wish to oppress them, or their brethren, in any way. But it is a wantonness of spirit, which we have not deserved from them. It is an ostentatious fondness of using their influence with great persons, to grieve us, without serving themselves. And instead of being stirred up by their friends abroad to what they do, their friends abroad have been stirred up by them. Now this is a sort of behaviour which an administration had much better check by due admonitions, than encourage its growth: for how far it may grow, they cannot foresee. The Dissenters are sincere well-wishers to the civil part of our present happy establishment; and they are to be esteemed and loved for it: but not to be gratified at the expence of those, who sincerely wish well to both parts. I am heartily sorry, that all the members of our church are not loyal and dutiful subjects to the King: but much the greater part of them are; the bishops and upper clergy in particular: and surely their desires merit as kind a regard in this case, as those of the Dissenters and their leaders. We indeed do not threaten if we are disregarded. But they have no more right to threaten than we: nor need they be feared, if they do. Their threatnings have been very safely slighted in a point which they have much at heart, I mean the Test: and so they may in this.

Permit me to add, that were those of our communion, who are unhappily and unjustly prejudiced, either against the King or his ministers, worse, in either of these respects, than they are, still the endeavour should be to make them better in both: for till that is done, our domestic affairs will never be on a firm and easy footing. Not that any thing wrong or hazardous should be done to reconcile them; but every thing that is right and harmless. Indeed such instances of kindness, when shown them, I am grieved to say it, have not produced, and probably will not produce so great, and much less so speedy returns as they ought; but some good effect they must produce; and perseverance in a due regimen will at length complete the cure. On the other hand, I apprehend, the rejection of this proposal will do the government by far more hurt amongst the Churchmen, than it can possibly do them good amongst

mongst the Dissenters. When the Bishops are asked about it, as they frequently are, by their clergy and others, what must they answer? We cannot with truth express disapprobation of it, or indifference to it. And if we did, we should be thought unworthy of our stations. Must we then be forced to say, that we are all satisfied of the absolute fitness, the great advantages, the perfect safety of the thing, and have repeatedly pressed for it, but cannot prevail? Would not this both sadly diminish our ability of serving the government, by showing how little credit we have with it; make very undesirable impressions on many minds concerning the King, and those that are in authority under him; as incapable of being won by the arguments or entreaties of those, who have so strong a zeal for them, to do an innocent favour to the church? Still, if we cannot succeed by respectful applications, I know it is our duty to make the best of the matter, and not disturb the public welfare, because in this particular we are unable to promote it. I would speak as gently of the affair as ever I could, where there was danger of doing harm: though I speak so earnestly, where I would fain hope to do good. But no mildness or prudence will wholly or nearly prevent the above-mentioned consequences.

I am sensible it may be argued, after all, that the failure of so many attempts on behalf of this scheme is presumption more than enough of their being some insuperable objection against it. But there cannot well be any other objection, than such as are known, and have been produced on the present occasion. And if those have been sufficiently answered, we are not to yield up our own understandings implicitly to the judgments of other persons in times past: especially as those judgments differ. For some great men have continued as steadily to approve of bishops in America, as others to disapprove of them. And possibly the reasons of the latter may, in part at least, have been only temporary, or they may have had too little serious attention to religious matters; or more fear, than they needed, of bringing difficulties on themselves by engaging in them. But whether any of these things be so or not, in general it is certain, that many designs have been long frustrated, or postponed, on one account or other,
which

which at length have been executed, and found beneficial.

I beg your pardon, sir, for being thus prolix: but I have gone through each head as briefly as I could: and should you think me ever so much mistaken, you will do me but strict justice in believing me to mean well; and to be, with the greatest respect, and the most grateful sense of your obliging treatment of me,

S I R,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

THO. OXFORD.

F I N I S.



